Commentary

Volume Sixty-seven, Number Two, February 1979

THE CASE AGAINST SALT II

EUGENE V. ROSTOW

SINGER'S PARADOXICAL PROGRESS
Ruth R. Wisse

AMERICAN POLITICS, THEN & NOW
James Q. Wilson

THE TROUBLE WITH LATIN AMERICA
Jean-François Revel

"NECESSARY MURDER": SPENDER & AUDEN IN THE 30's Bernard McCabe

GUARDIAN ANGEL—A STORY
Sydor Rey

A READING OF RUTH
Evelyn Strouse & Bezalel Porten

FICTION: LITERARY WAIFS
Pearl K. Bell

BOOKS IN REVIEW:

Marc F. Plattner
Joseph Shattan
Vernon Young
Charles Horner
John Weightman
Abraham Brumberg

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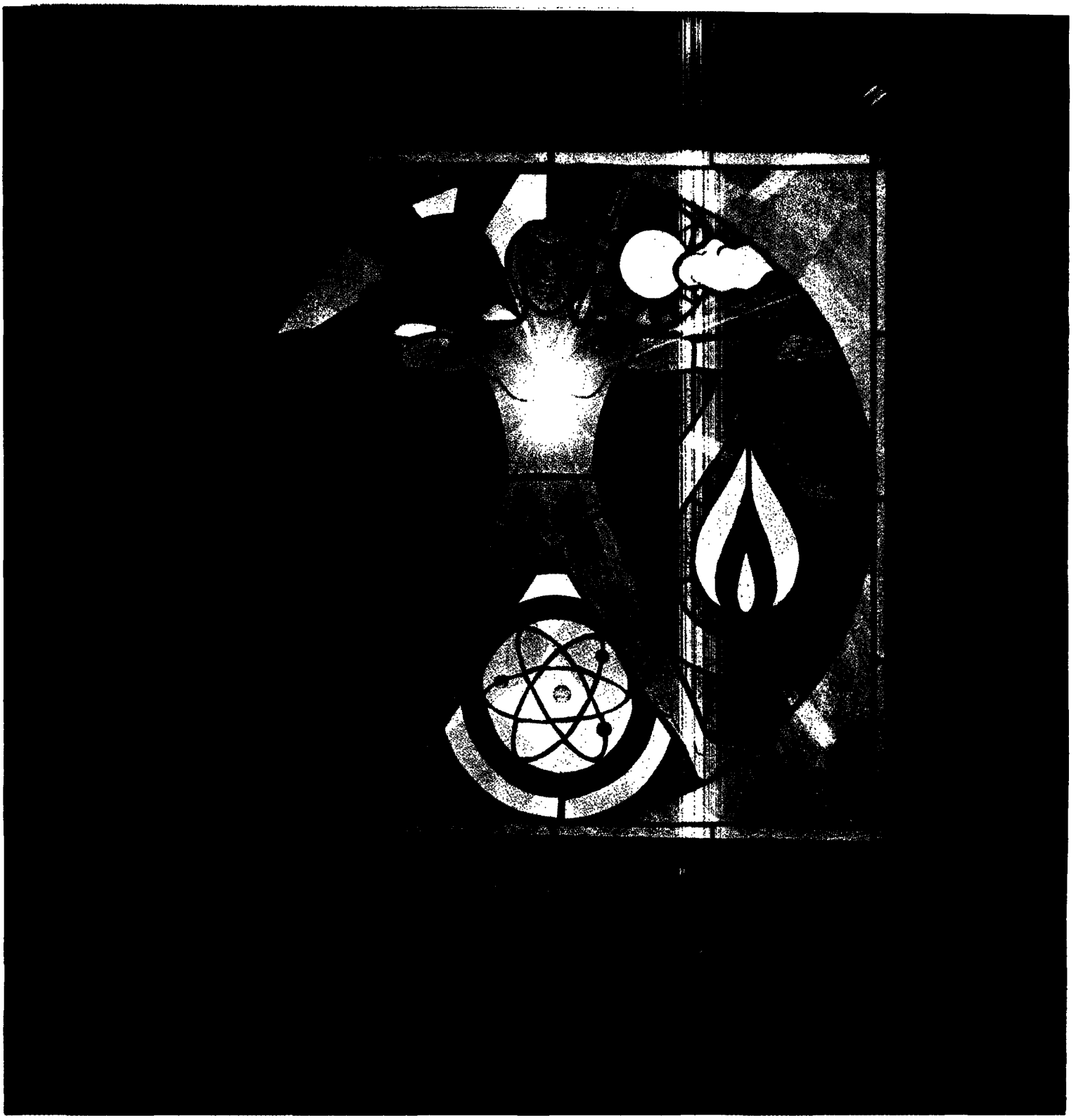

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Remember, the "sticker price" is only the suggested price. The actual selling price may be different. That's because the law of supply and demand affects the prices of cars, just as it affects most other prices. And market conditions change all the time.

For example: a very popular model may sell at the suggested price, but frequently cars will sell for less, because the automobile business is highly competitive.

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Commentary

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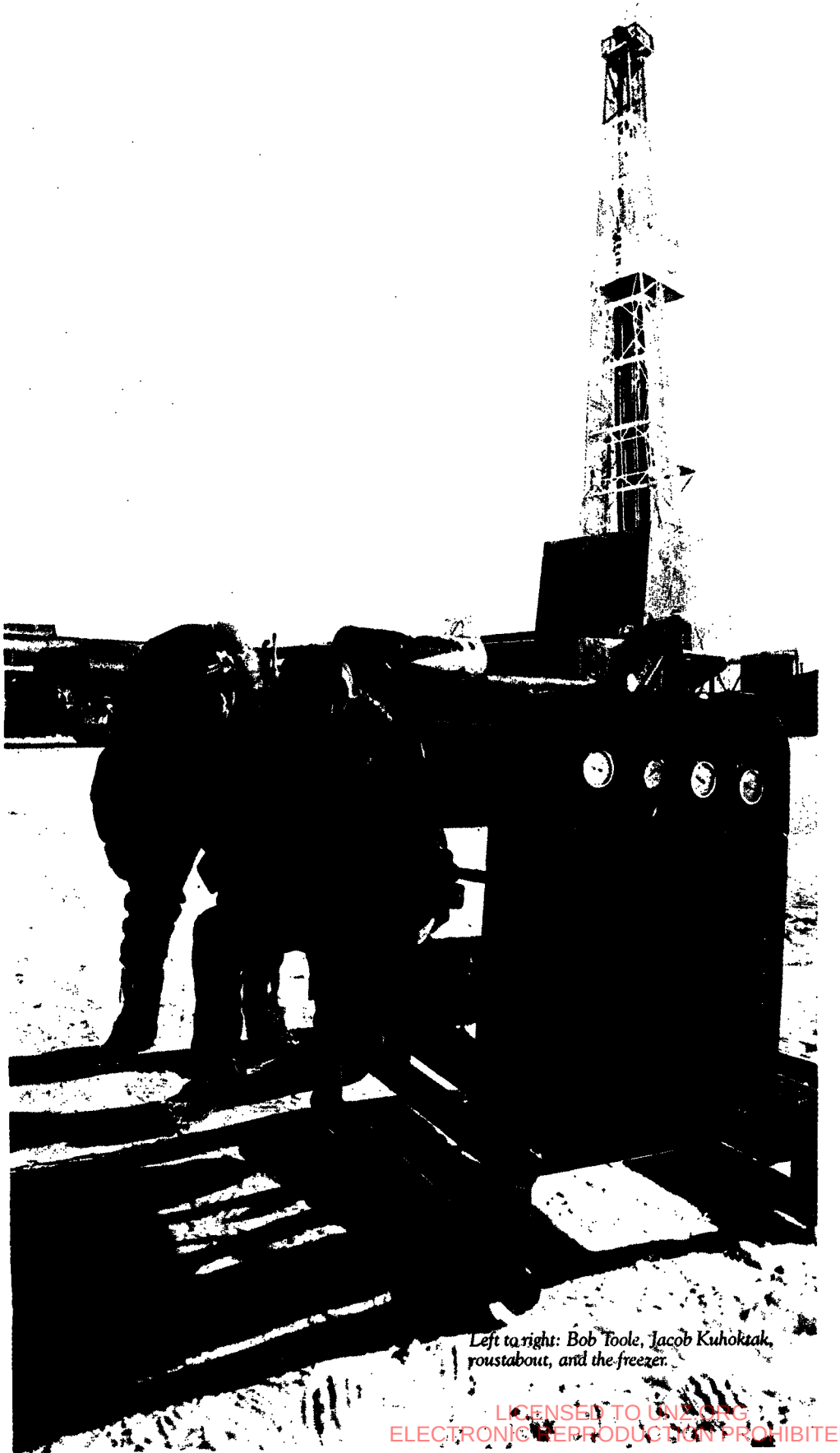
"It's 52° below zero up here, but, crazy as it sounds, we need this machine to keep the ground frozen."



Left to right: Bob Toole, Jacob Kuhoktak, roustabout, and the freezer.

"When you drill for gas north of the Arctic Circle, the way we're doing here at Canada's Mackenzie Delta, you expect a lot of problems," says Bob Toole, drilling superintendent for Gulf.

"But this one's a real fooler. It's a freezing unit. Even at 52° below zero, we need it to keep the ground around the wellhead frozen.

"At temperatures as low as this, you have to invent new ways to do almost everything."

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"This country is probably one of the toughest spots on earth to drill for natural gas. But we're drilling the wells. We're meeting the challenge."

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In sponsoring COMMENTARY, the American Jewish Committee aims to meet the need for a journal of significant thought and opinion on Jewish affairs and contemporary issues. Its pages will be hospitable to diverse points of view and belief, and it hopes to encourage original creative endeavor in the various fields of culture. The opinions and views expressed by COMMENTARY's contributors and editors are their own, and do not necessarily express the Committee's viewpoint or position. The sponsorship of COMMENTARY by the Committee is in line with its general program to enlighten and clarify public opinion on problems of Jewish concern, to fight bigotry and protect human rights, and to promote Jewish cultural interest and creative achievement in America.

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Letters from Readers

Nuclear Energy

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Thank you for having the courage to publish Bernard L. Cohen's "A Tale of Two Wastes" [November 1978] in which the supreme issue—"compared to what?"—is not evaded.

Opponents of nuclear power often claim that solar energy is without wastes. Not so. A solar power plant would use up about a thousand times more materials than a conventional power plant with the same capacity. The energy expended in the production of these materials is so large that a solar plant would not repay it for five years or more in Arizona, upward of ten years in the Midwest, and might never reach the energy break-even point in New England. (This assumes large, central solar plants; for small, domestic units, the situation is worse.) The prodigious quantities of energy needed to manufacture solar facilities must necessarily produce wastes, and among them there is only one type that is minuscule in volume, temporary in toxicity, and completely removable from the biosphere: nuclear.

PETR BECKMANN
University of Colorado
Boulder, Colorado

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Bernard L. Cohen . . . summarizes the state of the art with regard to coal and nuclear wastes quite accurately. I believe, however, that the issue of which fuel to use is a secondary consideration.

When fuel is consumed, wastes are produced. Many of these are toxic to man and to other inhabitants of the biosphere. Often the toxicity is apparent, as with radiation, noxious gases, and particulate matter. But recent history has also shown us that processes or products which were believed to be safe have had hidden toxicities. . . . Mr. Cohen illustrates this problem in his discussion of particulate emissions. It is the invisible (less than 10 micron) particles which are the most dangerous to man. Yet in a single individual the effects of this toxicity may not be measurable for twenty or forty years.

The activities of man have now reached a global scale, affecting the atmosphere, the oceans, and perhaps the very balance of life. These are no small matters and cannot be solved by engineering techniques alone. Of far greater importance is curtailing the consumption of energy. Each of us is aware of the tremendous waste characteristic of our civilization—it touches everyone on a daily basis. . . .

The proliferating energy-conversion systems (oil, coal, nuclear) and their noxious effluents contain the seeds of our destruction. Conservation should be the primary response to the energy question. An expanded concept of the total costs of energy production is essential. Both public and private sacrifices are the *sine qua non* of progress in this area. The "energy crisis" that we must fear will be the result of too much rather than too little.

MARTIN BLASER
Denver, Colorado

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . The Atomic Energy Commission originally formulated an exposure to radiation of the entire population of 170 mrem. . . . This standard of 170 mrem has never been changed . . . .

If the entire population were exposed to 170 mrem, what would be the consequences?

The answer depends on some elemental aspects of radiobiology. In a single generation of thirty years, 170 mrem annual exposure would amount to about 5 rem of radiation. This is 10 per cent of the doubling dose of 50 rem. The doubling dose is that dose of radiation which, when operative over a generation, would double the birth defects in the next generation and double the incidence of cancer in the same generation.

If the exposure of our population to nuclear power means a 10 per-cent exposure to the doubling dose, then the generation so exposed would suffer a 10 per-cent increase in cancer and the next generation a 10 per-cent increase in birth defects.

Assume a birth rate of 18/1,000, or 3,600,000 births each year. By Mr. Cohen's own figures, 6 per cent of current births suffer genetic defects. This is a toll of 216,000 yearly. An additional 10 per cent of this would be 21,000 additional birth defects each year.

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Current deaths from cancer are about 375,000 annually. An additional 10 per-cent increase in these deaths would mean 37,500 additional cancer deaths yearly.

If we add 37,000 additional deaths from cancer to 21,000 additional birth defects, we get about 58,000 casualties annually from the presumed safe operation of nuclear energy.

Now let us see how this compares to the casualties from fossil fuels.

Our current deaths annually from cancer of the respiratory tract are 70,000 and from pulmonary emphysema, directly and indirectly, 60,000. This is a total of 130,000 and represents the main burden of air pollution. If there were no air pollution, these rates would be halved and would then be due entirely to tobacco smoking; thus, half of the figure of 130,000, or 65,000, is due to air pollution.

Now of all the air pollution we have in our country, 15 per cent is due to power production. Thus, 15 per cent of 65,000 represents the current casualty rate due to air pollution from power production by fossil fuels. This number is about 10,000.

Now compare the figure of 58,000 due to nuclear power with the figure of 10,000 due to fossil fuels.

Moreover, this is not just a case of six times as many casualties from nuclear power. There is the fact that the 10,000 casualties from fossil fuels are mostly middle-aged individuals who contribute through their own negligence (by smoking). But the 58,000 casualties from nuclear power will be the newborn and the young who are innocent.

There is also the fact that if instead of spending almost $2 billion of public money annually on developing nuclear power as we have for the past twenty years, we had spent it on controlling air pollution, we would now be spared not only the 10,000 deaths from fossil-fuel use in power production but also the 58,000 deaths from the 170 mrem "safety standard."

The assumptions made here are biased in favor of nuclear power because it was assumed that there would be no major accidents in operation, transportation, or storage of wastes. Such an assumption is obviously fatuous because there already have been hundreds, if not thousands, of accidents in the operation and transportation of nuclear materials. In addition, no one knows how to store wastes. . . .

Finally, pollution by radiation is pollution of the gene pool forever—the casualties will be repeated indefinitely in succeeding generations—unlike the casualties of fossil fuels where the problem is limited to the single generation exposed.

DAVID GITLIN

Fairview Park, Ohio

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

The article by Bernard L. Cohen is very informative as far as it goes. One "waste" which is not considered, however, is the nuclear-power plant itself. A nuclear-power plant is alleged to have a useful life of approximately 30 years. At the end of that time the "dead" plant is a radioactive waste. It seems to me that Mr. Cohen should discuss the effects of this radioactive waste. . . .

S. BRODER

Baltimore, Maryland

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In "A Tale of Two Wastes" Bernard L. Cohen starts with the premise that the burning of coal and the use of uranium for nuclear energy "represent our only present major options for making electricity." He then presents evidence designed to show that coal wastes are much more harmful than nuclear wastes. . . .

First, I reject what is implicit in Mr. Cohen's premise—that we must choose between coal and nuclear to supply our additional electricity requirements. He knows that the rate of increased demand for electricity in the U.S. has been sharply reduced in recent years. But by comparison with Sweden and West Germany, both prosperous nations, we are still very wasteful in our use of energy. If we used all the available techniques for conserving energy, we might not need any increased supply of electricity for a couple of decades and therefore no additional nuclear plants or coal mines.

The federal government has spent many, many billions of dollars to help develop the nuclear-energy industry. In the past five years it has spent only a tiny fraction of that amount to promote the development of all kinds of solar energy, biomass, wind-power, etc. If in the immediate future the government began to spend the same kinds of dollars on solar as it spends on nuclear, then by the year 2000 a substantial amount of renewable, safe, non-polluting power would become available. From then on we would need increasingly less of both coal and nuclear energy.

Second, Mr. Cohen's treatment of the dangers of nuclear energy is grossly misleading. He tries to downplay the fact that after thirty years of study no demonstrably safe site has been found to store nuclear wastes. His suggestion that they be dumped into the sea impresses me as ridiculous and dangerous. Nuclear-waste disposal remains a very critical problem. It should also not be overlooked that the nuclear industry talks of building hundreds of additional nuclear plants, which will generate far more waste than we now have.

Mr. Cohen states, correctly I believe, that no American has been killed as a result of a nuclear accident. That is because, so far, we have been very lucky. But he does not mention that nuclear plants often have accidents, operational problems, and are frequently taken out of service. He does not mention, for example, the fire at the Brown's Ferry, Alabama, plant which cost over $100 million and almost resulted in a catastrophe of major proportions. Nor does he mention that no insurance company will insure nuclear plants against accidents for more than a small fraction of the total possible cost of a major disaster.

Finally, what about terrorists? There are, unfortunately, a sizable number of politicized lunatics who would sabotage a nuclear reactor or raid a plant or hijack a nuclear shipment to get the fissionable material to make bombs and blackmail the U.S., Israel, or the world. The horrors that fanatics have already carried out over the years are the clearest indication that they can and will try hard to inflict nuclear terror. . . .

LEO NEWMAN

Springfield, Massachusetts

BERNARD L. COHEN writes:

To Martin Blaser: In my paper, "A Catalog of Risks," soon to be published in the journal *Health Physics*, I compile from various sources estimates of a wide variety of risks and convert them to days of lost life expectancy for the average American. If we had all-nuclear electricity, the total environmental effects of radioactivity, including

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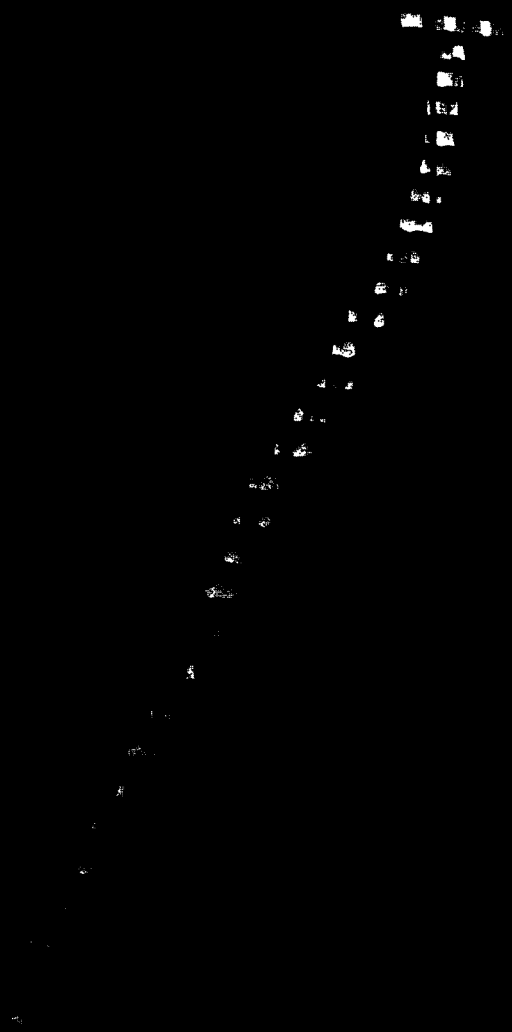

On the way up the work may not get easier
but the rewards get better

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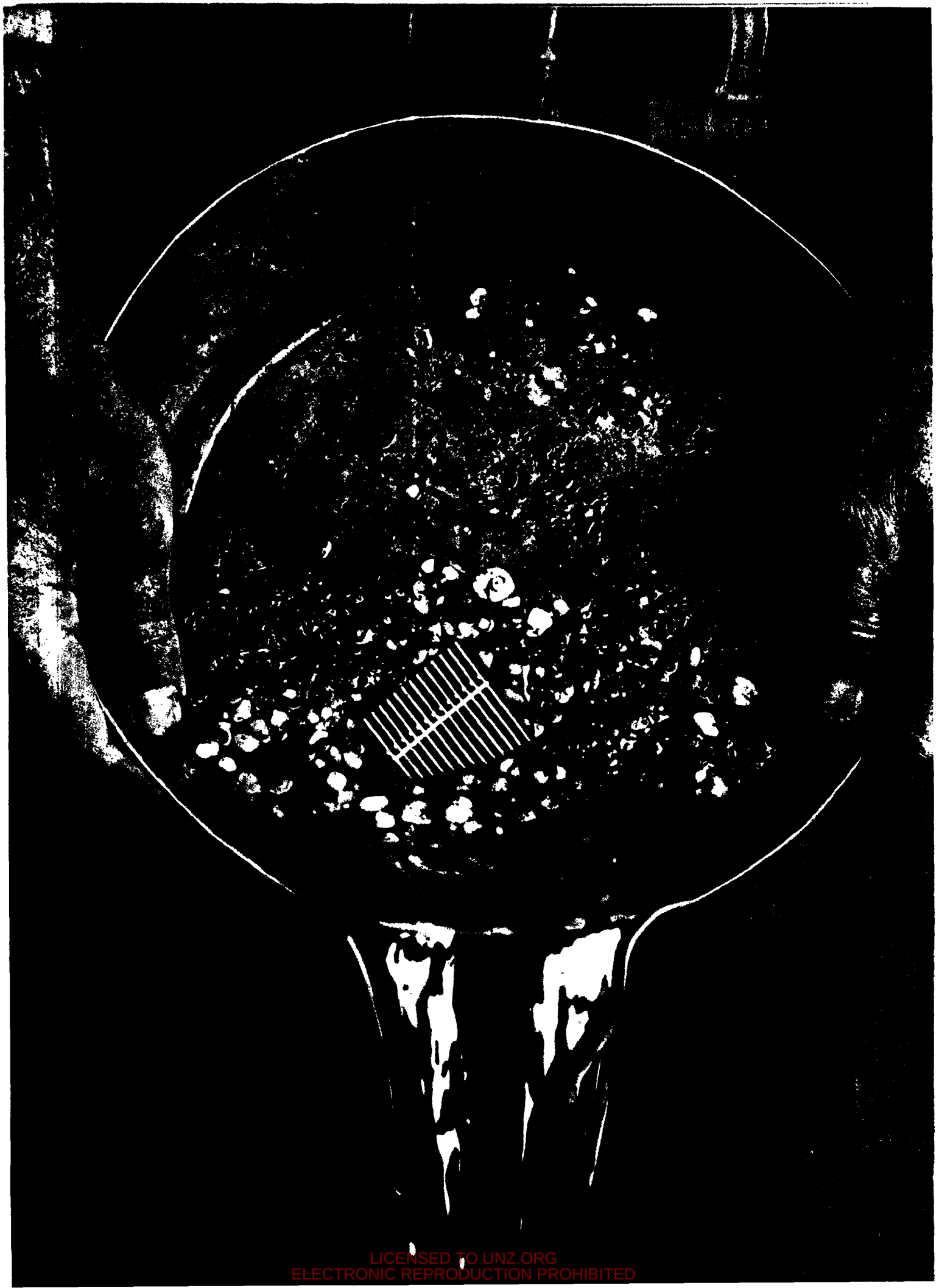

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Besides producing a much better product, Western Electric has mined a savings of $9 million from the process. And that's another way we're helping your Bell Telephone Company hold down the cost of your phone service.

Even bigger benefits

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This improved gold-plating technique is another way Western Electric is working to hold down the cost, while continually raising the quality of your phone service.

Keeping your communications system the best in the world.

Western Electric

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waste, accidents, etc., would reduce our life expectancy by about 1 hour according to government estimates, or by 2 days if we accept the claims of the Union of Concerned Scientists, the principal organization of scientific critics of nuclear energy. Pollution, explosions, fires, and asphyxiation from the use of oil and gas reduce our longevity by 3 or 4 days from each. Air pollution from coal burning reduces our life expectancy by about 13 days, and the danger of electrocution costs us 5 days. Thus, all of our uses of energy combined, all of the danger Mr. Blaser warns us about, reduce our life expectancy by a total of about 27 days.

Now let us put this number in perspective. Installing a smoke alarm in your home adds 10 days to your life expectancy. If you are more than 10 per-cent overweight, losing just 1 pound increases your life expectancy by 30 days. Switching from a small car to a standard size (which is safer) increases your longevity by 50 days. Various safety improvements during the last ten years have increased it by 100 days, and being serviced by a mobile coronary-care unit adds 110 days. A few risks that *reduce* our life expectancy are: the use of automobiles —200 days; being poor (in the U.S.) —800 days; smoking cigarettes (one pack per day)—2,000 days; being a citizen of an underdeveloped country—10,000 days.

Are the 27 days we lose due to all of our uses of energy combined really as great a threat as Mr. Blaser implies?

To David Gitlin: The rules governing emissions of radiation by the nuclear industry are such that if all our electricity were nuclear, the average American would be exposed to about 0.17 mrem per year, 1,000 times less than Mr. Gitlin's number, so all of Mr. Gitlin's consequences must be divided by 1,000. (Since only 12 per cent of our electricity is now nuclear, current exposures are many times smaller than this.) In addition, the generally accepted doubling dose for genetic effects due to chronic exposure is 100 rem rather than 50 rem, and this doubling dose applies to only half of the 6 per cent of live births with genetic effects, so his 21,000 genetic defects per year would actually be 5 if we had all-nuclear power.

There is no basis for Mr. Gitlin's application of the same percentage increase to cancers. If we use the numbers recommended by all official national and international groups, an average annual exposure of 0.17 mrem per year would cause about 7 extra cancers per year in the U.S., 5,000 times less than Mr. Gitlin's number. This makes the total of cancers and genetic defects 15 rather than 58,000. The cancers would occur at an average age of about sixty, not in "the young who are innocent."

Most of the other points Mr. Gitlin raises are covered in my original article, including his closing remarks about genetic effects—they are *not* "forever," but rather are bred out over about ten generations, and the 5 genetic defects per year mentioned above are actually the total number eventually expected over these ten generations—not the number in the first generation, as Mr. Gitlin suggests. Moreover, coal burning does produce mutagens which cause genetic defects, and it releases radioactivity (due to the trace amounts of uranium it contains) which, in the long run, is much more damaging than the radioactivity in nuclear wastes.

To S. Broder: The remains of a retired nuclear-power plant have a radioactivity level thousands of times lower than that of the waste discussed in my article. No one claims that handling it would be very difficult or dangerous, but there have been worries that it might be very expensive. Current estimates are that it might cost 5 to 10 per cent as much as constructing the original plant.

To Leo Newman: There is nothing in my article about the rate at which we should build new power plants; that is out of the area of my expertise. However, I might point out that even without growth, it would be highly desirable to replace the 30 per cent of our electrical generation that comes from oil or gas, not to mention many old, inefficient, heavily polluting coal-burning plants. While the *rate* of growth of our electricity use did slow down for a few years, it has increased back to its historic rate for the past two years. Growth itself has continued without interruption.

Solar electricity would require enormous amounts of steel which is produced by burning coal in a very polluting mode. It would also use enormous amounts of concrete, aluminum, and other materials whose production involves pollution, making solar electricity, as Petr Beckmann points out, much more polluting, and much more harmful to human health, than nuclear electricity. Solar energy may be useful in heating applications, and biomass may provide fuels for our vehicles, but the prospects for either to become competitive with nuclear energy as a major source of electricity do not now seem very bright.

My suggestion on ocean dumping is evaluated in my paper recently submitted for publication in the journal *Nuclear Technology*; but the principal results are discussed in my COMMENTARY article. Serious searching for a land-burial site has been in progress for only about two years and has so far been largely limited to preliminary exploration. No one doubts that many technologically satisfactory sites can be found, but the political problems of gaining acceptance from a local population in this atmosphere of intense, unreasonable fear will be very difficult indeed.

I have not mentioned Mr. Newman's points about reactor accidents because my article was confined to the question of high-level waste. Whether the fact that we have had no fatal nuclear accidents is due to luck or to good engineering is a matter to be debated among experts on reactor safety; the great majority of them believe it is the latter. Nuclear plants are no more frequently taken out of service than coal-fired plants. Insurance companies have more money staked on nuclear plants than on any other item. Their reluctance to risk all their assets in insuring against a major disaster should seem reasonable to anyone who understands that the very basis of the insurance business is to spread the risk broadly enough so a company will not be hurt by a single improbable event.

On the issue of terrorists stealing plutonium to make a bomb: in the first place, stealing plutonium would be a very difficult and dangerous operation with present safeguards; the thief would have only a small chance of even escaping alive. In the second place, designing a bomb is a very difficult task (the Princeton student produced a concept, not a design, and there is no good evidence that his concept could lead to a workable design); fabricating a bomb is even much more difficult, requiring expertise in such diverse areas as electronics, chemistry, mechanical arts, radiation protection, and handling high explosives. In the third place, a terrorist bomb is not a bomb that

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could destroy a city, but rather one that could destroy a large building. And finally, terrorists need not resort to nuclear bombs when they already have available many much easier ways of killing people.

Blacks and Jews

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Dorothy Rabinowitz's splendid article, "Blacks, Jews & New York Politics" [November 1978], is another illustration of a fallacy in which we tend to indulge. We are apt to engage in a premature celebration of the near-demise of overt anti-Semitism in the United States. This is especially true after a relatively extended period of peaceful relations among racial, ethnic, and religious groups.

The Jews have resided in New York City for over 325 years. No one can deny their tremendous contributions in every walk of life —cultural, economic, educational, political, and artistic. Today, 17 per cent of the population is Jewish; earlier, the Jewish population was as high as 27 per cent. Jews are serious and conscientious voters. Yet the first Jewish mayor of our city, Abraham Beame, was elected only in 1973.

Why? It has been the view of many of us for a long time that the Jewish leadership did not relish a Jewish mayor for the very reasons that Miss Rabinowitz points out in the case of Ed Koch, the second Jewish mayor, elected in 1977. If in his appointments the Jewish mayor refuses to yield to political "clubhouse" pressures or to preferential treatment on the basis of race . . . and adheres instead to an objective appraisal of merit and productive potential, he becomes the "Jewish mayor" to many. In this case, to the "boss" leadership of many blacks in Crown Heights and to many of their disciples, he is the *prejudiced* Jewish mayor. This appellation is employed both with respect to administrative action taken and appointments made. But it is good to remember that not all blacks in Crown Heights responded in this manner. Some blacks said that if it weren't for the fact that the Hasidim were "sticking it out," the area would be all black, and they did not wish to live in an all-black neighborhood.

However, we have made great progress in civil rights and intergroup relations in these past four decades. We cannot, we must not, go back. We should have Jewish mayors, black mayors (as we do in a number of cities), Italian mayors, and, yes, Wasp mayors on the basis of capacity, leadership, integrity, and ability to take appropriate and needed action. I am assuming, of course, that diplomacy and even tact are desirable qualities in mayors and their appointees, regardless of ethnic origin.

It should also be mentioned in passing that blacks need to develop a zest for the voting process. Had this been the case in the last election, there might have been a black mayor of New York City or at least a black on the Board of Estimate.

JOHN SLAWSON
New York City

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TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Having recently received my doctorate with a dissertation on black-Jewish relations in the United States since World War II, I would venture to say that I am familiar with virtually every magazine article, including those in COMMENTARY, written on the subject. But not until your publication of Dorothy Rabinowitz's "Blacks, Jews & New York Politics" has any publisher had the courage and honesty to offer to the public at large an article which "tells it like it is," without community-relations varnish and/or palliative appeasement.

All my own research indicates that not only does anti-Semitism exist among blacks, but it is growing stronger and more dangerous. Virtually nothing constructive is being done about it by the Jewish community because the attitude seems to be that if we ignore it, maybe it will go away. Miss Rabinowitz's realistic recognition of the problem is a small but significant beginning in reversing this self-destructive Jewish behavior pattern. . . .

MARVIN WEITZ
Riverdale, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . One of the services Dorothy Rabinowitz performs in her article is to expose the vicious nature of much of the anti-Semitic mood which has been around for the last few years. The propaganda about Crown Heights which appeared in the *Village Voice* is one example. What makes this type of anti-Semitism truly vicious is the fact that it is espoused in the name of liberalism, in the name of benefiting the underdog. If you do not go along with it, the implication is that you are not liberal and have no sympathy for the underdog. . . .

CAROL WEINSTEIN
New York City

Foreign Aid

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

As one who has spent several decades working closely with bilateral and multilateral aid programs in Third World countries, in Washington, and at the UN, I would like to thank P. T. Bauer and John O'Sullivan for the magnificent piece on foreign aid ["Foreign Aid for What?," December 1978]. . . .

Everything said about foreign aid in the article is clearly and demonstrably true. And yet to say that this particular emperor has no clothes on is to invite certain Coventry treatment from the . . . educated classes in the West. . . .

The authors are to be congratulated especially on their recognition that alien peoples might well choose deliberately to retain certain traditions even at the cost of X amount of "economic development." . . .

One justification for foreign economic assistance which is not mentioned by Messrs. Bauer and O'Sullivan is the one to the effect that without foreign aid, peace is impossible and war is inevitable. The argument breaks down into limited and universal elements. The limited theme has it that economically depressed states are naturally aggressive and are likely to attack their neighbors, though in the real world, desperately poor states are the least likely to resort to war, and are the least likely to be capable of doing so successfully. The universal theme portrays an Armageddon in which the starving and enraged masses of the Third World sweep irresistibly over the complacent West. These are fairly prevalent justifications, particularly effective when used on college sophomores with little knowledge of things military.

With regard to the current shibboleths about the desirability of multilateral as against bilateral aid: the power-hunger, arrogance, and stupidity of the multilateral-aid professional is equivalent to that of the bilateral-aid professional, but without even the limited restraints which the necessity of bowing in the direction of a national interest entails.

JOHN W. BOWLING
Troy State University
Troy, Alabama

Camp David

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I read Robert W. Tucker's "Behind Camp David" [November 1978] with great interest. Mr. Tucker's analysis of the actual military implications of the Israeli withdrawal from Sinai is borne out by a recent article in the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* which agrees with Mr. Tucker's assessment that the costs of Camp David to be paid by Israel in terms of strategic assets "are significant in themselves." In fact, the Israeli air force will be crippled, perhaps decisively, in its

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role at the very time the Saudi air force will be able to make operational the advanced American aircraft supplied to them in the famous "evenhanded" deal. . . .

When discussing the balance of profit and loss in the Camp David agreement, Mr. Tucker does not mention what the Carter administration gained or lost. . . . It is quite clear that President Carter and his advisers have given priority to the survival of the Saudi and Sadat regimes over the security of Israel, despite public pledges and speeches.

The very successful tactics of the Carter administration were—and are—to put the Israelis in the wrong and force them to make concessions they did not want to accept when the actual treaty was drafted. A 100 per-cent acceptance of demands by President Sadat is turned into a compromise generously engineered by the White House, while the rejection of the 100 per cent by the Israelis is portrayed as rather disgraceful stubbornness. . . .

Mr. Tucker bases his careful analysis on the assumption that a Camp David treaty between Egypt and Israel will be signed. But it seems that the events in Iran have deprived Camp David of all real impact. The Saudi and Sadat regimes are in as much danger of being overthrown by the upsurge of Islamic fundamentalism as that in Teheran. . . . Getting the Sinai, the West Bank, and Gaza will not make that much difference. Even the return of East Jerusalem, so discreetly desired by all Western foreign ministries, will only act as a spur to the Islamic revolution.

It is this surge that makes President Sadat try to take all meaning and commitment out of the vital Article VI of the Camp David agreement, an act blandly tolerated by the White House. . . .

L. R. MURAY

Letchworth, England

On Revolution

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

If "Whatever Happened to the Russian Revolution?" by Robert V. Daniels [November 1978] is at all representative of Mr. Daniels's work in progress, his comparative history of revolution will certainly be most interesting and instructive. Unfortunately, his article demonstrates the sort of bias in favor of left-wing revolution which makes

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reasoned discourse in this area difficult and renders some recent studies unintelligible. By describing "fascism" as "coercive counterrevolution," Mr. Daniels seems to be taking as a given that "*the* revolution" is a continuing Left-oriented movement, or, at least, that only a Left revolution can be called a "revolution." I believe that the fascist movements of the 20's were revolutionary in intent; to label them as counterrevolutionary is to define them in terms of Left revolution and to undervalue their innovative natures. I commend to Mr. Daniels and your readers the article by Eugen Weber, "Revolution? Counterrevolution? What Revolution?," the concluding essay in *Fascism: A Reader's Guide* (edited by Walter Laqueur, 1976). . . .

I am also troubled by Mr. Daniels's suggestion that there is a "natural law of revolution." That there are resemblances between revolutions cannot be denied. That the resemblances are so regular as to be describable as natural law is doubtful. Neither the work of Crane Brinton nor that of Lyford P. Edwards successfully demonstrates that there are such natural laws. I can only hope that Mr. Daniels is using the words "natural law" in some special sense and will not let himself be bogged down, as were some of his predecessors, in the artificial analysis required by such an approach.

LEONARD H. RUBIN
Scarsdale, New York

ROBERT V. DANIELS writes:

Leonard H. Rubin raises important points with which I am totally in agreement but which I was unfortunately not able to spell out in the brief compass of one article directed at Russia. In my forthcoming book I deal extensively with "revolutions of the Right" as well as with the methodological problem of regularities and models in comparative history.

Harold Rosenberg

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I want to apologize for at least two inadvertent errors in my piece on Harold Rosenberg ["Remembering Harold Rosenberg," November 1978]. Harold's past was a spider web, and I'm sure a few others will crop up as I hear from mutual friends and acquaintances.

1. The "congenital game leg" that I mentioned was not that at all. It was the result of osteomyelitis (a bone-marrow disease) which began when he was twenty-one and was to plague him the rest of his life.

I asked him about his leg more than once, but could never pin down the source. He was as reticent about his leg as he was about so many personal things, although so voluble about ideas and observations. My apologies for misrepresenting this remarkable man in any way, apart from personal interpretation—where everything is subjective.

2. I seem to have exaggerated the length of time Harold and Dwight Macdonald were neighbors in the same building. It was closer to thirteen years than "almost a quarter of a century." My thanks to the several people who have contacted me.

SEYMOUR KRIM
New York City

Affirmative Action

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In recent months COMMENTARY has provided a forum for those wishing to attack prevailing affirmative-action programs ["Why Bakke Won't End Reverse Discrimination:1" by William J. Bennett and Terry Eastland, September 1978; "Why Bakke Won't End Reverse Discrimination:2" by Nathan Glazer, September 1978; "Are Quotas Good For Blacks?" by Thomas Sowell, June 1978]. These critics have adopted the major arguments embraced by opponents of racially-conscious employment and academic selection.

As a black who has recently completed undergraduate and legal education, I should like to call upon my past experience, and somewhat limited knowledge, to challenge these views.

1. *The majority of Americans—both black and white—are opposed to preferential treatment for minorities. Consequently, the will of the majority has been thwarted by a strongly committed minority.*

Curiously enough, of the views expressed by the opponents of affirmative action, this is the one I have the least quarrel with.

This is not to say that I have any faith in the validity of the public-opinion polls relied upon by Messrs. Sowell and Glazer. Quite the contrary, the bizarre and presumably erroneous conclusions that polls often report (e.g., that a majority of Americans are opposed to the Constitution and the Bill of Rights) demonstrate that opinion polls are a highly crude method of assessing public sentiment. Rather, my central quarrel is with the simplistic assumption that there is something undemocratic in allowing a committed minority to dictate policy that affects a less committed opposition majority.

For the most part, a rather small percentage of Americans opposed to affirmative action are actually affected by such programs. These are individuals who are marginally qualified for their chosen field of study or employment. The remaining opponents—either because they possess clear qualifications or because they lack such qualifications—are not directly affected by affirmative-action policies. . . .

Pitted against this largely apathetic majority is, to use Mr. Sowell's words, "a highly committed minority" which, for a variety of reasons involving either personal stake or philosophical belief, strongly supports racially-conscious selection policies. Due largely to this group's commitment, affirmative-action programs have continued to survive.

Far from being undemocratic, this state of affairs is part of the essence of democracy. From the congressional filibuster to the protections of the Bill of Rights, our democratic system affords safeguards which protect minorities and in many cases allow their views to control policy.

This state of affairs stabilizes a democratic system and channels the potentially volatile discontent which could result from allowing a marginally committed and apathetic majority to dictate policy to a more seriously committed minority.

2. *Affirmative-action programs are ill-suited methods for alleviating discrimination.*

By adopting a limited view of the goals of affirmative action, critics have asserted the failure of such programs.

The authors . . . (and Justice Powell in *Bakke*) argue that racially-conscious academic selection is an ill-suited method of increasing the number of minority professionals servicing minority communities. But proponents of affirmative action, while, of course, wishing to provide increased service to the minority community, hardly base their advocacy upon this single goal.

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The professions from which minorities have traditionally been excluded, in addition to serving the public directly, also serve it indirectly, through their influence over a variety of decision-making processes. By increasing their representation in professional careers, minorities will also be so served. My own recent experience illustrates this point.

Upon graduation from law school, I chose to accept employment with a major New York law firm. Our clients include, among others, an automobile manufacturer, a major domestic bank which lends substantial sums to minority businesses, and an adoption agency which places a large number of minority children in foster and adoptive homes.

Each of these, and similarly situated institutions, makes decisions which affect the lives of its minority employees, customers, and clients. Of necessity, attorneys for such institutions often influence these decisions.

An attorney from a minority background will frequently view problems from a perspective that differs from that of his white colleagues. While his views might not prevail, and in many instances might be of limited value, the fact that they are heard is in and of itself a socially desirable and worthwhile result.

The benefits of minority representation in the legal profession are not limited to the private sector. As crime statistics continually indicate, a disproportionate number of minorities face prosecution under the criminal-justice system. It is to be hoped that the presence of minority prosecutors will limit the extent to which these prosecutions, or the failure to prosecute white offenders, are determined on racial grounds. Additionally, the presence of minority prosecutors will help to limit the impression often given that the criminal-justice system is a mere instrument for minority oppression.

These arguments are not, of course, limited to the legal profession. Minorities entering the business sector can assist in developing policies which take account of minority opinion.

When viewed from this perspective, much of the criticism by the opponents of affirmative action is undercut. Mr. Sowell, for example, asserts that the continuing disparity between black and white incomes demonstrates the failure of affirmative action. However, since many of the fields of employment which affect the lives of minorities, such as social work and teaching, can hardly be characterized as financially lucrative, this argument is fallacious. The real question is whether minorities have been assimilated into a variety of influential fields, not whether they have gained financially from such assimilation.

3. *The most desirable system for academic and employment selection is one which relies exclusively upon examinations, numbers, and scores.*

In recent years, increased interest has arisen in graduate and postgraduate education. Due to the larger number of applicants, students who achieve scores on standardized test and grade-point averages which in former years would have been sufficient to gain entrance into particular fields of study are now categorized as academically unfit. These students are far from incapable of completing their desired course of study; rather, they are victims of a system in which the supply of academic places has not kept pace with the increased demand.

In an attempt to alleviate the harshness of this situation, educational institutions have followed Harvard's lead and adopted a system which attempts to evaluate, for lack of a better term, an applicant's "personal character" as well as his intellectual ability. The race of each applicant has become relevant to this inquiry.

Curiously, opponents of racially conscious selection practices contend that this system, which delves broadly into each applicant's background, is more dehumanizing than a system which, to quote Mr. Glazer, places ". . . an exclusive reliance on examinations, numbers, scores." Underlying this view is what I would characterize as an undue faith in the ability of standardized testing to evaluate an individual's aptitude for a particular course of study.

This faith is not generally shared by individuals who have recently taken such tests. Every graduate or undergraduate student I have ever discussed standardized testing with can relate a horror story concerning a colleague of substantial intelligence who has performed poorly on such tests. Conversely, students are generally familiar with some

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not particularly bright classmate who has achieved high scores on standardized tests.

When one takes into consideration the prevalence of the mistaken evaluations based on standardized tests as well as the fact that under the present state of expansion in applications many academically capable students are denied admission, the inadequacy of a system which relies exclusively on numbers becomes clear.

The Harvard system has more to say for it, however, than that it tempers the harshness of exclusive reliance on test scores. It is, rather, the most rational method of allocating limited academic places.

Despite Messrs. Bennett and Eastland's assertion that in ". . . the context of professional schools, . . . for obvious reasons, much greater weight must be placed on academic qualification . . .," it is in this cos*text* that the value of a racially-conscious system becomes evident.

Ideally, the major function of professional life is public service. *The intellectual ability of the individual practitioner is only one quality necessary for the provision of such service. Often, the practitioner's "personal character" may be of equal, if not greater, importance.*

In the legal profession, for example, an attorney's patience with, understanding of, and compassion for other human beings are often as crucial as his ability to engage in theoretical legal analysis. These personal qualities will assist him in interviewing witnesses, eliciting facts from clients, and in serving as a negotiator attempting to develop settlements which will satisfy all parties to a dispute.

Certainly, similar qualities are essential to physicians in diagnosing their patients' ailments and to teachers in imparting knowledge to their students.

While admittedly the race of an applicant will not guarantee the presence of these personal strengths, it may, in addition to other information about an applicant, suggest their presence. . . .

I have, in this rather long letter, tried to enumerate some of the areas in which I disagree with the opponents of affirmative action. I believe, however, that our fundamental disagreement lies elsewhere. . . . The COMMENTARY authors appear unwilling to acknowledge the hardships that will result from an abandonment of affirmative action. On the other hand, I am willing to concede that a continuation of the present system will operate as a burden upon many whites presently competing for limited employment and educational positions. Nevertheless, in view of this country's deplorable history of racial discrimination, such a course is, regrettably, demanded. . . .

MICHAEL H. WARREN
New York City

WILLIAM J. BENNETT and TERRY EASTLAND write:

Michael H. Warren takes us to task for arguing that great weight should be placed on the academic qualifications of candidates for admission to professional schools. But in arguing his point, he admits that intellectual ability is a quality, though only one quality, needed by a sound professional. We agree. It is only one quality, but it is a necessary one. As the test and grade scores cited in our article make plain, this quality is not present in many of the minority applicants *admitted* to professional schools. Although we agree with Mr. Warren that the patience, understanding, compassion, and character of applicants must also be put in the balance, these qualities do not cancel the importance of intellectual ability. Further, the personal attributes Mr. Warren describes are just that: personal attributes. Character is something an individual possesses, not something a group possesses. We would approve and applaud an admissions system that places a value on the personal character of applicants, but we would not have that system assign a "character score" on the basis of a person's race. To do so would be racism.

NATHAN GLAZER writes:

1. On the opinions of the majority: I agree minorities do, and in many cases should, determine policies on issues on which they feel strongly and others do not. But there are two caveats: first, on issues where fundamental principles are at stake, as I believe they are in this case, one cannot so eas-

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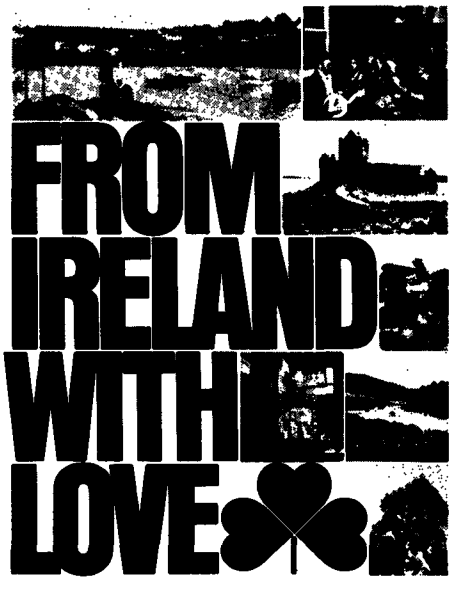

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ily discount the views of the majority. Second, I would not underestimate the commitment of those who oppose quotas. Thus, rather than "stabilizing a democratic system," statistically-oriented affirmative action may heighten the level of internal conflict.

2. I fully agree that law and medicine need the perspectives of all groups, and that practitioners from a minority group may have qualities that make them more effective as practitioners dealing with members of the minority. And here I disagree with Justice Powell in selecting one narrow ground for approving race-conscious admissions policies (to increase academic diversity). The question remains, how is this to be done, and at what cost to other values, in professional education and professional practice?

3. In my article I did not come out for limiting the criteria for selection to scores on tests. I said that that was one way of guaranteeing race would not be a factor in the selection process, and that such approaches were used in many countries, but I accepted—and accept—the legitimacy of taking many factors into account, including race. My problem is, first, whether such a narrowly balanced Supreme Court, reviewing further cases in which civil-rights and federal-government lawyers argue for quotas, will be willing to live with Justice Powell's compromise, and, second, what limits we are to set in allowing race to operate as one factor in the selection process. Scores on tests have their limits, but when the disparities between scores on two groups are as wide as they were in the Davis Medical School admissions process, then one value has been allowed to dominate all others—such as those which emphasize the scientific abilities of prospective doctors.

I find it interesting that Mr. Warren is so willing to trust to the good will and good sense of admissions committees who will be going beyond scores to take into account the various factors important for medical and legal practice that cannot be captured by tests. Clearly something important has happened in American life when both sides agree that discretion will be used to increase the number of minorities, rather than to discriminate against them. But some defenders of statistically-oriented affirmative action want a large place for discretion, so that if the numbers do not come out right, they will be able to argue that discrimination has been at work.

A final point: opposition to goals and quotas should not be taken as opposition to affirmative action. Affirmative action initially called for race- and group-consciousness in all the procedures that go into selection so that the minorities would not be excluded by limited recruiting or by unwarranted expectation of discrimination. In the Executive Order setting it up there was no reference to statistical tests of the adequacy of an affirmative-action effort. Unfortunately the term "affirmative action" has come to mean setting statistical goals and quotas, which must lead to action on the basis of race, color, and national origin. I am not an opponent of affirmative action: what I oppose in affirmative action, as it has developed, is the setting of statistical goals and quotas.

THOMAS SOWELL writes:

Since Michael H. Warren simply redefines democracy out of existence and substitutes anecdotes for empirical evidence, I wonder what is left as a basis for a rational discussion.

Terror in Uruguay

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Mark Falcoff mentions in his review of *Hidden Terrors* by A. J. Langguth [Books in Review November 1978] that one part of the book consists of "a brief narrative of the decline of democracy in Uruguay, with special attention to those events which later figured in Costa-Gavras's film, *State of Siege* (1973)." Mr. Falcoff also notes that he wrote an article on the subject, "The Uruguay That Never Was: A Historian looks at Costa-Gavras's *State of Siege*." Though the title gives some indication of Mr. Falcoff's opinion of the film, he does not share his conclusions with his readers, since he is after all reviewing a book and not the film. I would, therefore, like to say a few words about *State of Siege*, a film which was a huge success both at the box office and with the reviewers, although it was a complete hoax. . . .

I found the film particularly upsetting . . . for very personal reasons . . . . Both *Hidden Terrors* and *State of Siege* deal with the kidnapping and assassination by the Tupamaro terrorists of Dan Mitrione, a former Indiana police chief loaned by the U.S. to the Uruguayan government. . . . Mitrione was listed as an AID official, which gave him a para-diplomatic status in Uruguay. As far as I know, he was the first para-diplomat of any nation to be abducted and executed. The crime, committed early in 1970, promptly led to others. In short succession the American Ambassador to Guatemala was killed by terrorists in a kidnapping attempt and the German Ambassador to Guatemala was kidnapped and executed. I have no doubt that these events inspired Palestinian terrorists to make an attempt on my life on May 5, 1970, while I served as Ambassador of Israel in Asuncion, Paraguay. I was spared, but one of my secretaries was killed, and another survived five bullets. . . .

According to the film, Mitrione was instrumental in instructing the Uruguayan police in the use of torture. I can neither confirm nor deny this allegation. . . . But the real hoax perpetrated by the film was to create the strong impression that Mitrione was loaned to a totalitarian dictatorship to torture the Tupamaro "freedom fighters." Audiences—who of course knew nothing of the real events—were led to root for the brave guerrillas (all, needless to say, young and good-looking) against the "gorillas," as military bullies are called in Latin America.

The real story was entirely different. The government to which the United States loaned Dan Mitrione was the democratically elected government of Uruguay, a nation which at the time was rightfully considered the showcase of democracy in Latin America. This government was under relentless attack by the Tupamaros, a gang of terrorists or, as it is leftist or liberal fashion to say nowadays, urban guerrillas. They were not the downtrodden, or the products of misery, but . . . the offspring of middle- and upper-class families. They did not fit any ideological label: they were not Communists, Stalinists, Trotskyites, Maoists, or Castroists. Possibly they were anarchists. Their plans for the future of Uruguay were vague, but they had one aim: to bring down the government, to destroy "the system" (which was democracy). This was why the Uruguayan government asked the U.S. for help.

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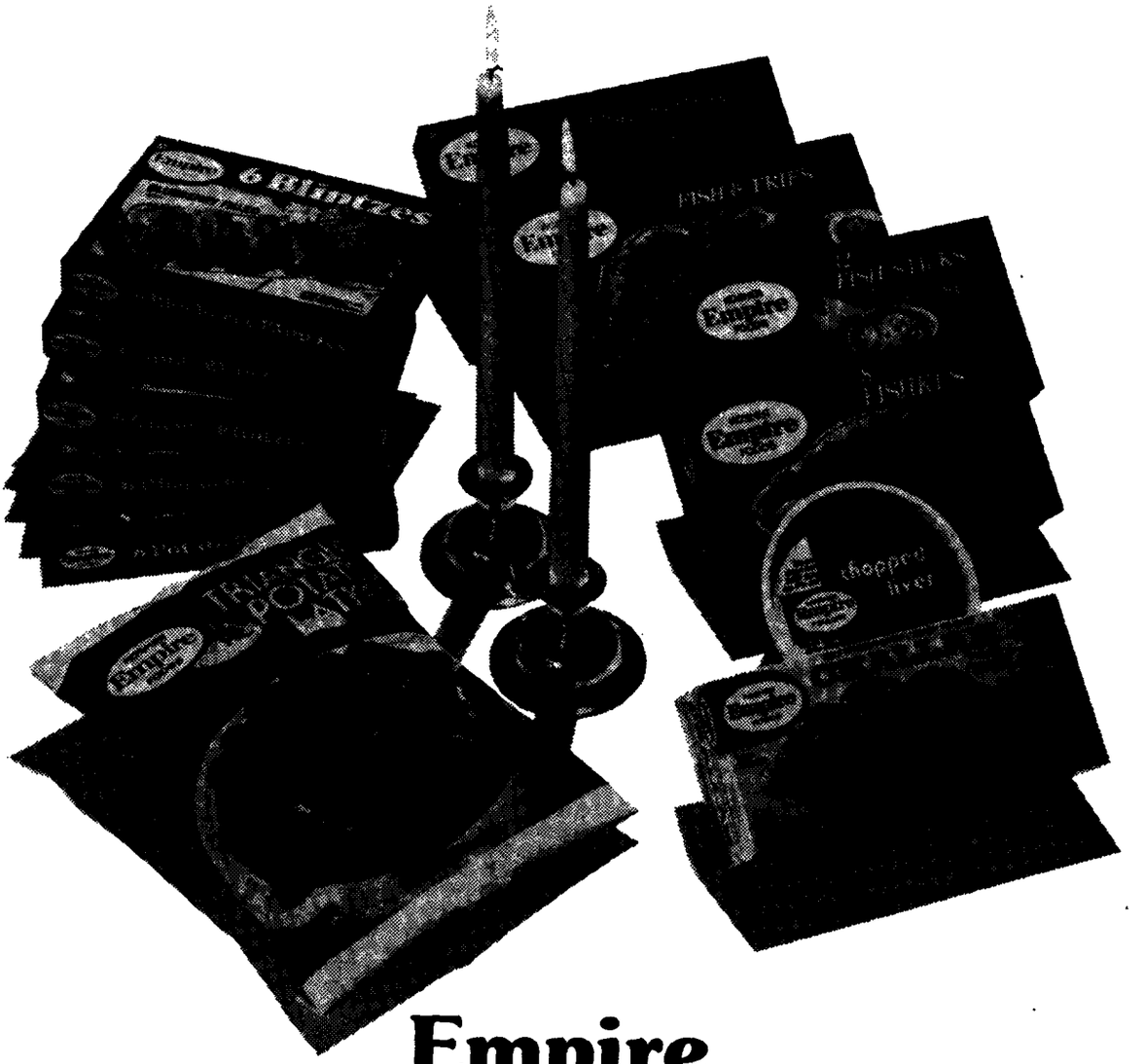

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Dan Mitrione was meant to be part of this help, but he was kidnapped and assassinated, and the Tupamaros went on from success to success. At this juncture the Uruguayan government decided that the terrorists could not be fought by the old-fashioned police force. The army was called in to reestablish order . . . . Uninhibited by the scruples of the civilian authorities, the military killed and jailed the terrorists, broke up their cells, searched out their hideouts. . . . The Tupamaro terror came to an end.

What followed was the usual Latin American tragedy. Once the military had finished its task, it presented the bill: it wanted power. . . . Today, Uruguay has one of the harshest military dictatorships in Latin America.

Thus, *State of Siege* was a paean not to the defenders but to the gravediggers of democracy. . . .

BENNO WEISER VARON
Brookline, Massachusetts

Orthodoxy

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In his review of *A Coat of Many Colors* by Abraham D. Lavender [Books in Review, November 1978], Julius Weinberg argues that feminist Blu Greenberg's suggestions for changes in Orthodox Judaism are unrealistic because of "the glacier-like pace with which the Orthodox rabbinate approaches even the most minute of proposed alterations in the *Halakhah*." While I agree with Mr. Weinberg on the futility of the feminists' expectations, I find the reason he gives inadequate and misleading. Indeed, if it were only the rabbis who stood in the way of the feminists' aspirations, the latter might well be justified in believing that one long blast of their trumpet would bring the walls of Orthodoxy down. But the belief in the immutability of the *Halakhah* is not a rabbinical monopoly; it is precisely what Orthodoxy is all about. . . .

Were the comunity's existence predicated on justification of itself in terms of prevailing philosophies and values, it would long ago have ceased to exist. Beginning a dramatic spurt in growth at about the time of World War II (largely under the inspiration of recently arrived hasidic *rebbes* and heads of renowned talmudic academies), Orthodoxy proceeded single-mindedly in pursuit of its own conception of the good society without excessive concern over whether it was regarded in a favorable light or, more typically, seen as outlandish, intolerant, archaic, or just plain *meshuge*. (Now that "alternative life styles" have gained some popularity, it is a bit more acceptable to be "into" religion.) . . . If the feminists wish to carry on a quarrel with Orthodoxy, they will have to get on the end of a long line of plaintiffs with more basic objections. After all, even if the ideals of the equal-rights advocates were to sweep the nation, such matters as separate seating in the synagogue would remain far less anomalous to American life than the Orthodox education of children in intricate, legalistic talmudic tractates or the twenty-five-hour period each week when it is forbidden to cook, write, use the light switch or telephone, or travel by vehicle. . . .

The nonplussed feminists are blocked less by a rabbinical line of defense than by the absence of that male domination (and potential for a female disaffection) which they assume to be the case. Committed as they are to their own rigid criteria, they cannot be expected to note the character of the male leadership in many Orthodox rituals and its place in the overall pattern of Orthodox life or to observe that this leadership . . . does not transfer itself to the multitude of other activities (social, economic, and religious) in which the woman has as much if not more to say than the man. The feminist entering into a dialogue with an Orthodox woman might well be surprised to find herself confronted not with a servile, benighted female but with a spirited, educated woman offering argument for argument, Jewish life and theology for feminist utopias and ideology, and sympathy for sympathy. . . .

Although, as an Orthodox Jew, I pray that my community be preserved from unlikely, as well as likely, dangers, the feminist thrust at the *Halakhah* seems to be as strange and as futile as—to use the Yiddish image—a Greek in a *sukkah*.

ISRAEL KAMINSKY
West Hempstead, New York

JULIUS WEINBERG writes:

The notions expressed by Israel Kaminsky appear to reinforce rather than contradict those I expressed in my review. Mr. Kaminsky and I agree—although our images may differ—that the chic Orthodoxy posited by Blu Greenberg and others is an amalgam that has little ideological consistency—or future.

The Catacombs

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

As an update of Michael Ledeen's fine article, "The Unknown Catacombs" [September 1977], the letter written by Henryk Z. Geller [Letters from Readers, October 1978] offers highly important information regarding the state of the Jewish catacombs in Italy.

While Mr. Geller quite correctly describes the seriousness of the problems, more needs to be said about the recently initiated efforts of the World Jewish Congress. At its General Council meeting in Washington, D.C., in November 1977, the WJC voted to approve the proposal of the Union of Italian Jewish Communities concerning the Jewish catacombs, and on October 1, 1978, the Heritage Commission of the World Jewish Congress was established. The Commission's goals are both conservational and scholarly; in cooperation with local Jewish communities it will seek to preserve and report on Jewish sites and culture in the Diaspora. While many projects are being studied, the initial efforts will be in support of the Italian Jewish catacombs. Further action awaits only the signing of the new Concordat in Rome. . . .

Israel has worked most diligently to preserve its Jewish past. Now Jews in other parts of the world will have a unique opportunity to respond similarly and seek to help preserve in this fashion the religious and cultural patrimony of the Diaspora.

DORIS BRICKNER
Director, Heritage Commission
World Jewish Congress
New York City

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COMMITTEE FOR A FREE CHINA

Campaign for Freedom

"Diplomatic 'normalization' itself erupts unexpectedly as an impulsive move by this Administration. . . . There can be no particular pride attached to our resolution of this longstanding China question. Clearly, the Carter Administration caved-in to the Communist Chinese insistence on three preconditions in return for normalization. . . ."

Senator Bob Dole
Republican, Kansas

"I disagree with the President's decision and feel it is a slap in the face to our staunch friend and ally the Republic of China on Taiwan and to the Congress. We should not end our commitment to Taiwan for who will be our ally if we are so willing to dump our allies?"

Senator Dick Stone
Democrat, Florida

Please write your Senators and Congressman today. Let them know that you agree with our "CAMPAIGN FOR FREEDOM" and urge them to vote for the right of the people of the Republic of China to remain free. Let your elected representatives know that you disagree with the way President Carter is trying to abandon Taiwan.

A symbol of friendship and freedom for over 30 years. Let's keep it that way!

17 million people are counting on you!

On the evening of December 15, 1978 President Carter announced his official recognition of the People's Republic of China—Communist China. This is within his authority as President of the United States.

But on that evening he also:

- Abandoned the Republic of China on Taiwan by turning our government's back on the 17 million free people of that country.
- Announced that as President he was terminating the 1954 Mutual Defense Treaty—a treaty approved by over two-thirds of the Senate.
- Demonstrated to the world that the U.S. will break its pledged word to a faithful ally whenever it seems expedient to do so.
- Ignored the 1978 Congressional resolution that expressed that "any proposed policy changes affecting the continuation in force of the United States-Republic of China Mutual Defense Treaty shall be a matter for prior consultation with the Senate." That vote expressed the deep concern of the Congress for the future of Taiwan.

Millions of Americans were shocked and saddened by this abrupt and unjustified action.

It may have been thought that recognition of Communist China could be useful in today's worldwide power struggle between Russia and the U.S. We only pray that the hoped for benefit will outweigh the serious and certain damage to our nation.

However, we reject the reasoning that the Republic of China (Taiwan) and its free people must be cruelly abandoned merely in order to establish diplomatic relations with Communist China. Does any one really trust a nation which walks out on a loyal ally?

We reject the assertion by the White House that the President can break an official treaty—the law of the land—when he deems it convenient. Our nation has rejected such abuse of power in the past and we must do so again.

George Bush, former head of America's liaison office in Peking, declared, "We gave all and got nothing . . . in acquiescing to China's three demands" (de-recognition of Taiwan, breaking the U.S. Mutual Defense Treaty with Taiwan, and pulling out few remaining troops out of Taiwan). "With no apparent guarantee to a Taiwan solution, we are simply diminishing U.S. credibility around the world."

We urge you to join with us in support of the unmistakable desire of the Chinese on Taiwan to remain free.

The Committee for a Free China has launched a nationwide "CAMPAIGN FOR FREEDOM" in support of the Republic of China. This campaign will unite at least one million Americans in urging the Congress to prevent the President from turning America's back on the Republic of China.

The 17 million free people on Taiwan must count on *you*, the American people, since they cannot now count on the present United States government.

I AM PROUD TO JOIN THE "CAMPAIGN FOR FREEDOM!"

I want to help support the right of the 17 million people of the Republic of China (Taiwan) to remain free. Enclosed is my contribution to help in the "CAMPAIGN FOR FREEDOM."

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The Case Against SALT II

Eugene V. Rostow

In human disputation justice is only agreed on when the necessity is equal; whereas they that have the odds of power exact as much as they can, and the weak yield to such conditions as they can get.
—THUCYDIDES, *History of the Peloponnesian War*

OVER the last century, the yearning for peace has given rise—especially in Great Britain, the United States, Scandinavia, the Netherlands, and Canada—to the belief that disarmament agreements, or agreements for arms limitation, are an important means for securing peace. It would be more accurate to say that settled expectations of peace between nations result in disarmament. When neighbors share the same goals, agreements on arms limitation or disarmament can be of marginal utility. For example, the celebrated agreement between Great Britain and the United States providing that no warships be stationed in the Great Lakes has become the symbol for the general policy of Canada and the United States with respect to their common border. And many countries have had unarmed borders for years without benefit of a formal treaty. But the enthusiastic advocates of arms-limitation treaties tend to forget that such agreements cannot achieve their goals when some of the parties pursue quite different policies.

The arguments made for SALT II today are the same as those put forward on behalf of the Washington Naval Treaty of 1922 and the other arms-limitation and arms-reduction arrangements on which the Western governments lavished so much time, attention, and hope during the 20's and 30's.

The Washington Naval Treaty and its progeny did not prevent Pearl Harbor. We, the British, and the French, lulled by the treaty, and hard-pressed in any event to find money for naval-building programs, let our navies slide. We did not build our full quotas or modernize our ships. The Japanese and later the Germans, on the other hand, took full advantage of their quotas. We should recall what the phrase "pocket battleship" meant. The pocket battleship, which the Japanese and the Germans used with such great effect in World War II, was a cruiser with the striking power of a battleship—a powerful modern man-of-war built within the tonnage limits of the treaty.

The post-World War I arms-limitation agreements—demilitarization of the Rhineland as well as the various naval agreements—failed to prevent World War II. Indeed, those agreements helped to bring on World War II, by reinforcing the blind and willful optimism of the West, thus inhibiting the possibility of military preparedness and diplomatic actions through which Britain and France could easily have deterred the war. Churchill never tired of pointing out that World War II should be called the "Unnecessary War," a war which Anglo-French diplomacy could have prevented.

Despite this melancholy history, we are told everywhere that the SALT II agreement now in the final stages of negotiation will be "politically stabilizing"; and that the breakdown of the SALT negotiations, or the rejection of the prospective treaty by the Senate, would "end détente," "bring back the cold war," increase the risk of nuclear and of conventional war, and revive "the arms race," which would cost us another $20, $70, or $100 billion.

EMOTIONALLY and politically, this is the strongest argument for ratification: that even a bad agreement with the Soviet Union is better than no agreement at all. The issue presented by SALT, Senator George McGovern has said, is that "the alternative to arms control and détente is the bankruptcy and death of civilization." And in a speech in London on December 9, Secretary of State Vance said that "without an agreement, our technological and economic strength would enable us to match any strategic buildup, but a good agreement can provide more security with lower risk and cost. And we recognize that without SALT, the strategic competition could infect the whole East-West political relationship, damaging the effort to create a less dangerous world which is at the heart of Western foreign policies." Since, however, we were infinitely more

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secure without an arms-limitation agreement during the period 1945-72 than we have been since, the logic of this argument is not immediately apparent.

The claim that a SALT II agreement would be politically stabilizing, and would foster Soviet-American cooperation in other areas, is just as empty. We have had the Interim Strategic Arms Limitation Agreement with the Soviet Union—SALT I—since 1972. Far from stabilizing world politics, the Interim Agreement has been an important structural feature of the most turbulent and dangerous period of the cold war (the period ironically known as "détente").

Thus, during the six-and-a-half years following President Nixon's trip to Moscow in 1972, we have endured a series of major Soviet offensives. First, the Soviet Union defaulted on its obligations as a guarantor of the peace agreements of 1973 in Indochina. These agreements, for which Mr. Kissinger received a Nobel Prize, were treated by the Soviet Union as scraps of paper. The final North Vietnamese invasions of South Vietnam in 1974 could never have taken place without Soviet equipment and other help. Then the Soviet Union, which had promised President Nixon to cooperate with him in seeking peace in the Middle East, violated those promises by supplying, planning, encouraging, and even participating in the Arab aggression against Israel of October 1973.

So far as the 1972 Interim Agreement itself is concerned, Secretary of State Rogers testified to the Senate that we had made a number of unilateral interpretations of the agreement and that we should regard any breach of these policies by the Soviet Union as a violation of the "spirit" of the treaty. All these unilateral interpretations of the agreement were violated by the Soviet Union. We did nothing about them.

But the ultimate absurdity is the claim that SALT II would limit or reduce either arms or arms expenditures. The one thing the 1972 Interim Agreement on Offensive Strategic Arms did *not* do was to limit Soviet arms development or expenditure, or the growth of the Soviet nuclear arsenal.

The SALT I Interim Agreement was presented to Congress and the country with fanfares from President Nixon, Secretary of Defense Laird, and Mr. Kissinger, as he then was. We were assured that the agreement would slow down the Soviet buildup of strategic offensive weapons; discourage the Soviets from adopting counterforce strategies; and enhance peace and our security in other unspecified ways. But the principal claim made for the agreement was that it would apply "brakes to the momentum of Soviet strategic missile deployments," in Secretary Laird's words.

Yet instead of stabilizing or reducing its strategic offensive strength during the period of the Interim Agreement, the Soviet Union has moved ahead rapidly: far more rapidly, in fact, than had been predicted as possible by American intelligence. It has successfully MIRVed (that is, placed several warheads on a single missile) its ICBM (intercontinental ballistic missile) forces, taking advantage of their greater delivery capacity (throw-weight) to develop missiles with as many as 10 warheads per missile, as compared with 3 on our Minuteman III missile. It has improved the accuracy of its missiles and developed new and improved missiles to replace older ones within its forces. One of the most significant of these developments is the Soviet production of mobile ICBM's. President Carter has said that the Soviet Union has actually deployed mobile ICBM's. Whether or not this has happened to a significant extent, the experts agree that the Soviet Union could do so quickly and on a large scale. Mobile ICBM's would completely alter the nuclear equation, making ICBM's almost as elusive as submarines, and making it impossible, or much more difficult, to target a nuclear strike against them. The Soviet Union has also adopted "cold-launch" methods which permit a greater throw-weight with a given missile, and the more rapid reloading of the launcher after use.

As a result of these changes, the Soviet strategic nuclear force has been radically enlarged since 1972 in all categories and, according to present estimates, will be far stronger by the early 1980's. At the time of the Interim Agreement, the aggregate throw-weight of the Soviet ICBM's was twice that of the American force. In the early 1980's, it will be about four times as large. The throw-weight of our own ICBM's is unchanged, and is not expected to change during the treaty period.

The Soviet Union is believed to have had 1,600 warheads available to its ICBM force in 1972, compared to our 2,154. In the early 1980's, we shall have the same number, 2,154, but the Soviet figure will rise to between 6,500 and 9,200, even under the limitations expected in a SALT II treaty. The Soviet Union is producing between 150 and 200 ICBM's a year. We make none. The area-destructive power of Soviet warheads will increase by a half; ours by an eighth. The capability of Soviet weapons to knock out hardened (defended) targets, such as missile silos, will have increased tenfold. If our cruise missiles, now under development, fulfill present expectations, ours will have increased fourfold.

In the category of submarines, the Soviets are believed to have had 845 SLBM's (submarine-launched ballistic missiles) at the time of the 1972 agreement, and presently are near the ceiling of 950. Some Soviet SLBM's are as large or larger than our Trident I, which we have not yet introduced. Our figure will not change. In warheads, we are believed still to have a substantial lead. In 1972 we had about 3,000 SLBM warheads; our present figure of 5,400 is not expected to change during the next few years—while it is anticipated that the Soviet figure of 845 will increase some fivefold as they MIRV their SLBM's.

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The comparison of bomber forces is more difficult, depending on whether so-called medium bombers are included. Our heavy bomber force, still based on the out-of-date B-52, is declining, and President Carter has canceled its replacement, the B-1. We had 450 heavy bombers in 1972 to 140 for the Soviet Union, which also had 1,100 "medium" bombers assigned to missions in Europe or Japan, but available for attacks against the United States as well. In addition, the Soviet Union has and is manufacturing a new bomber, the Backfire, two-thirds the size of the B-1. It is not to be counted under the limits established by SALT II, although the State Department concedes that it can be used for intercontinental missions. By 1985, the Soviet Union will have 300 to 400 Backfire bombers. We will have no comparable planes by 1985 beyond our less proficient and much less numerous FB-111's.

While it is difficult to compare the bomber strength of the two nations in the field of intercontinental strategic nuclear weapons, there can be no question about the steady decline of our bomber superiority, which was one of the key premises of the 1972 agreement. That decline is measured not only in the comparison of the planes themselves, but in the development of Soviet air defenses, which we have decided to ignore altogether. The Soviet Union has a large and widespread network of fighter planes deployed for air defense, thousands of SAM's and other anti-aircraft weapons, and at least one anti-ballistic-missile (ABM) system in operation. The Soviets have actively continued ABM research and development since 1972, and presumably would be able to deploy more units on short notice. These defensive measures would exact a heavy toll in the course of any attack, and therefore create doubt about the perceived deterrent effect of our bomber and missile forces.*

In short, instead of applying "brakes to the momentum of Soviet strategic missile deployments," SALT I served to increase that momentum. On the United States, SALT I had the opposite effect. Lulled by the treaty—as well as by illusions about "overkill," and by the high hopes we had invested in détente—into thinking that the "arms race" was being brought under control, we allowed ourselves to fall behind in most relevant categories of military power: behind in production; behind in research and development; and behind in programming.

As for the claim that a SALT II treaty will reduce the cost of our own defense programs, General George M. Seignious II, the new director of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, said on December 13 that the SALT II agreement, as it seemed likely to emerge, coupled with the further development of the Soviet nuclear arsenal made possible by the agreement, "is going to require additional money to modernize the strategic systems we have." In his final press conference on October 30, 1978, Paul Warnke, the outgoing director of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, said that while he believed SALT II would save us money, by restraining certain forms of Soviet expansion we should otherwise have to match, it was not possible to "point to some form of saving" that the treaty would accomplish. For by establishing certain quantitative limits, the treaty would shift Soviet efforts to the quest for qualitative superiority. The effort to match qualitative improvements, based on active research and the development of new technologies, is hardly more economical than the repetitive manufacture of old-model weapons.

Yet the proponents of SALT II claim that the failure to achieve or ratify the treaty would add as much as $100 billion to our defense budgets over a five-year period. Those figures of extra costs if the SALT negotiation fails, or if the Senate refuses to consent to the treaty, are just as fanciful as President Nixon's claims that he had ended the cold war and achieved "détente."

There is no case, then, for SALT II as a step toward peace. The record is clear that the first SALT agreement on the limitation of offensive strategic weapons contributed to an intensification, not a lessening, of tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union throughout the world. The rapid Soviet buildup of new and advanced strategic weapons under the agreement gave rise to charges of "deception," "breach of faith," and indeed of breach of the agreement. And the 1972 Interim Agreement gave the Soviet Union certain great and tangible advantages. For example, we halted the development of our ABM systems, in which we had a technological lead. They, as already noted, have continued their research and development in that important field. There is no reason to believe that the process of continued negotiation with the Soviet Union would change this pattern.

II

According to information now generally available, the SALT II agreement will consist of a Treaty, a Protocol, and a Statement of Principles. The Treaty would expire on December 31, 1985, the Protocol on a date not yet agreed in 1981, either June 30 or December 31. The Statement of Principles concerns the agenda for the negotiations of SALT III and has no terminal date.

The key provision of the SALT II treaty is that each side would be permitted to have the same number of strategic nuclear launch vehicles—2,400 until a date in 1982, and then 2,250. Within this limit, there is a sublimit of 1,320 on the number of launchers carrying multiple independently-

*For a fuller discussion of the American-Soviet military balance, see Edward N. Luttwak's article, "Defense Reconsidered," in the March 1977 COMMENTARY.

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targeted reentry vehicles (MIRV's)—ICBM's, SLBM's, and aircraft equipped to carry air-launched cruise missiles (ALCM's) with a range greater than 600 kilometers. At this writing, there is still reported to be a dispute between the American and Soviet negotiators as to whether all armed cruise missiles should be covered, or only cruise missiles armed with nuclear weapons.

There are two further sublimits within the category of 1,320 MIRVed launchers: (1) a limit of 1,200 on the number of MIRVed ICBM launchers plus MIRVed SLBM launchers; and (2) a sublimit of 820 on the number of MIRVed ICBM launchers. Within that limit of 820, the Soviet Union would be allowed to have a number of fixed modern large ballistic-missile launchers (MLBM) equal to their present force in this category, either 308 or 326. This force includes the formidable Soviet SS-18's, which we believe now carry up to 10 separate megaton-range warheads. The SS-18 and SS-19 are capable of destroying protected missile housings and command centers. The Soviet SS-18 force by itself could destroy more than 90 per cent of our land-based missile force, which consists of 54 Titans, 450 Minuteman II's, and 550 Minuteman III's, at one blow. The United States now has no such weapons, and the treaty would deny the United States the right to build any during the treaty period.

The treaty contains a number of limits on the modification of existing ICBM's, primarily the rule that any test of an ICBM with more reentry vehicles (RV's) than had previously been tested will cause it to be classified as a "new type"; each side is limited to testing one "new-type" ICBM during the treaty period. The United States has tested 3 RV's on Minuteman III and the Soviet Union has tested 4 RV's on the SS-17, 6 RV's on the SS-19, and 10 RV's on the SS-18. There may also be agreement that no "new-type" ICBM can have more RV's than the maximum already tested for existing ICBM's—10 per missile for the Soviet Union, 3 for the United States. A late rumor suggests that both sides may have the limit of 10. Because of the delays in our MX program, however, there is no possibility that the United States can deploy a "new-type" ICBM prior to the expiration of the treaty.

The Soviet Union has made great progress in fractionizing its missiles, including those targeted against Europe which do not come under the treaty. There is agreement that the treaty should establish a limit of 14 RV's per missile for submarine-launched missiles, and of 20 or 35 (not yet agreed) for the number of cruise missiles on a single aircraft.

United States B-52's and our 4 B-1 test aircraft, and Soviet Bisons and Bears are to be counted as heavy bombers for purposes of the treaty. The Soviet Backfire bomber, much discussed in the negotiations, will not be counted, although it is capable of reaching targets throughout the United States, and is being produced steadily.

The treaty does not attempt to limit the number of missiles or warheads which may be produced and stored. Any "reductions" in the Soviet-deployed nuclear force required by the treaty need not result in the destruction of the weapons, but only their transference to a warehouse.

Both sides have agreed that neither side will take any action which would circumvent the purposes of the agreement. This provision raises serious problems with regard to the possible transfer of cruise missiles or cruise-missile technology to our allies. Whether this question has been satisfactorily resolved in the negotiations is not now clear. Similarly, there is agreement that each side would refrain from interfering with the other side's national means of verification. Here, too, damaging controversies have already developed, particularly with regard to Soviet encoding of "telemetry," which would enable them to circumvent our monitoring devices.

The protocol would ban the flight testing or deployment of mobile ICBM's and air-to-ground missiles and the deployment of ground- and sea-launched cruise missiles with a greater range than 600 kilometers during a three-year period. At this time, the provisions with respect to ground- and sea-launched cruise missiles, of special concern to our NATO allies, are reported to be still in negotiation.

III

THE provisions of the prospective SALT II treaty are highly technical and are difficult for the layman to judge. But the treaty as a whole can be measured by the layman against our goal in the continuing process of negotiating agreements with the Soviet Union on nuclear arms. That goal is to guarantee a nuclear stalemate—that is, to keep nuclear weapons from being used or brandished in world politics. It is an altogether sound goal, which has been the lodestar of American policy since we proposed the Baruch Plan in the late 40's. The operative principle of both the SALT I Interim Agreement and SALT II, in the American view, is to prevent the development of a situation in which either side might be in a position to gain a great advantage by a first strike—an advantage so dazzling that political leaders might be tempted to seize it.

What, then, do the data suggest by way of an answer to the basic question of how the prospective SALT agreement would affect the adequacy of our second-strike capability?

In attempting to answer this question, we must first realize that the deck now consists almost entirely of Jokers. Nonetheless, the attempt must be made. In formulating an answer, we must consider the number and vulnerability of missiles and warheads, their accuracy, their ability to reach key targets, and the effects of active and passive defense programs on the vulnerability of Soviet targets of all kinds.

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As mentioned previously, the Soviet Union is continuing to build and modernize its strategic nuclear missile force at an alarming rate—150 to 200 ICBM's a year, compared to a rate of zero for the United States; 6 ballistic-missile submarines a year, as compared to zero for the United States (1½ a year in the 1980's); and 30 to 50 intermediate- to long-range bombers a year, as compared to zero for the United States. The Soviet Union builds missiles of a far greater throw-weight than ours, and can therefore put more or larger MIRVed warheads on each missile than we can, so that even under the proposals we made in March 1977, it could have twice as many ICBM warheads of five times the individual yield of ours. The figures reported in current drafts of the treaty would be even less favorable. And to make matters worse, the Soviets have made rapid advances in catching up on our previous technological advantages in MIRVing, accuracy, and smaller RV's.

With these trends in mind, former Deputy Secretary of Defense, Paul Nitze, who helped negotiate SALT I, concludes that SALT II in its present form will leave the United States without a credibly adequate second-strike capability. In a speech on December 5, he said: "Over the past fifteen years it would not have profited either side to attack first. It would have required the use of more ICBM's by the attacking side than it could have destroyed. By the early 1980's, that situation will have changed. By that time, the Soviet Union may be in a position to destroy 90 per cent of our ICBM's with an expenditure of only a third of its MIRVed ICBM's. Even if one assumes the survival of most of our bombers on alert and our submarines at sea, the residue at our command would be strategically outmatched by the Soviet Union's retained warmaking capability."

In its study, *Is America Becoming Number 2?: Current Trends in the U.S.-Soviet Military Balance,* released on October 5, 1978, the Committee on the Present Danger adds:

> We do not have to assume that the Soviet Union will actually attack U.S. strategic forces. The point is that they will have the capacity to *increase their advantage* with a counterforce first strike. After such a first strike, the United States would still have a capability for a second-strike retaliation against Soviet economic and political targets—in plain words, against their "hostage" cities and industrial centers. If Soviet civil defense failed, we could do "unacceptable damage" to them, but their forces held in reserve would still be greater than ours, and we have no effective civil (or air) defense. Their third-strike potential would make our second-strike less credible. It would leave the U.S. with a dangerously inadequate deterrent.

In presenting SALT II, the administration dismisses such concerns. Spokesmen for the administration concede that Soviet progress in strategic arms and particularly in ICBM's makes our own ICBM force vulnerable, and that our old bombers would have a hard time penetrating Soviet anti-aircraft defenses either to launch cruise missiles or to drop bombs. But, they say, we still have a great many MIRVed submarine-launched missiles, and therefore, perhaps, still an edge in the total number of warheads.

Yet our present substantial advantage in warheads is a transient one. The inherent flexibility afforded by large throw-weight Soviet ICBM's and the momentum of the Soviet MIRV program can soon erase the United States advantage in numbers of warheads (unless, that is, we shift gears promptly and on an adequate scale).

Secondly, our increasing reliance on submarine-launched missiles presents problems of its own. Such missiles are still notably less accurate than ICBM's, and therefore less capable of striking at the Soviet missile sites and other military targets than at hitting cities.

In August 1978, the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency attempted to dispel these doubts in a "dynamic" study of U.S. and Soviet strategic capability through the mid-1980's, and to escape from the logic of what it called "static" measures of the two strategic forces. The study does not measure the capacity of each side to destroy the other, but purports to calculate the capacity of Soviet and American strategic forces to destroy a hypothetical set of 1,500 "hard" (or defended) and 5,000 "soft" (i.e., undefended) targets. It thus assumes away the important disparities between the number and hardness of the targets in each country. The Soviet Union now has more hard targets than the United States, and is rapidly hardening soft targets, while we are standing still, even with regard to command-and-control centers. By the mid-1980's, the Soviet Union will have twice as many hard targets as the United States.

The ACDA study also makes unrealistic assumptions about the destructibility of soft targets as the result of the explosion of a single weapon, whatever its size and yield. It makes inadequate allowance for anti-aircraft and anti-missile defenses and the effect of Soviet civil-defense measures.

But there is a deeper problem with the ACDA analysis, which runs through the whole of the administration's case for SALT II. Our leaders tell us that the Soviet rulers will be restrained by their knowledge of our capability to inflict unacceptable damage on their people and their society if they push us too far.

However plausible this argument may have been up to the time of the Cuban missile crisis, when we still enjoyed overwhelming nuclear superiority, it has long since lost even the appearance of conviction. But Secretary of Defense Brown, Ambassador Paul Warnke, and other official spokesmen for the administration continue to repeat it as gospel. It remains the heart of their argument for SALT II. Indeed, for all practical purposes it is the whole of it.

I have always had the greatest difficulty in ac-

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cepting this theory—Robert McNamara's theory of mutual assured destruction (MAD)—according to which we and the Soviets would hold each other's cities and people hostage, thus preventing any first strike, and neutralizing nuclear weapons. I find it hard to imagine that the President of the United States would actually order the destruction of Moscow or Leningrad, save under circumstances of the most extreme provocation, such as the actual prior destruction of major American cities. I find such a step nearly inconceivable if our major cities had not been destroyed, and the exchange would result in the immediate destruction of New York and Washington, even if our ICBM's had been destroyed. Secretary Brown's threat to blow up Soviet cities in retaliation for a Soviet first strike against our satellites or our ICBM's would be less than credible if the Soviets had enough weapons left in reserve to blow up our cities and possessed substantial enough reserves to dominate the postwar world. A Soviet arsenal of that size could neutralize our nuclear forces and emasculate our second-strike capability. It would thereby make us vulnerable to Soviet political coercion.

It is this analysis of the diminishing credibility of our threat to blow up the Soviet population which puts the argument of "overkill" into perspective. The possibility of using our submarine forces in an immediate strike against Soviet cities, always dubious, is now close to the margin of futility. The same cannot be said for the growing Soviet capacity to attack our ICBM's and other military targets. If we allow Soviet superiority to reach a certain level, the Soviets will have checkmated our threat to attack their soft targets.

In addition to its reliance on an increasingly dubious second-strike capability against cities and people, SALT II would inhibit us from reestablishing our second-strike capability against hardened military targets—in the current state of the nuclear balance, the retaliatory possibility which has the most credibility as a deterrent, and as an option for action if deterrence fails.

To deal with the threat of a Soviet first-strike capacity, and to restore the strategic balance generally by the early 1980's, will not be easy. The President's decisions to cancel or delay the B-1 bomber, the MX missile, and the Trident submarine make it nearly impossible for those weapons to be available before the late 1980's, even assuming that the decisions against them are reversed. It probably would take nearly as long, and cost nearly as much, to deal with the problem in the short run by reviving the production of Minuteman III's (or B-52's). The Minuteman III production line has been closed recently. And a crash program along these lines, or its equivalent, would be prevented by the numerical ceilings established in SALT II.

At this time, it seems probable that the treaty would also prevent the United States from adopting the only feasible "quick fix" for dealing with the problem, the promising plan for deploying missiles using a multiple aim-point system (MAPS), the so-called "shell game." Under this proposal, the United States would construct a large number of vertical protective shelters or silos, each capable of holding an ICBM and its launcher. Some would be empty. The missiles would be moved periodically, to make a first-strike against them highly problematical. According to reports, the Soviet Union has rejected an American inquiry about the compatibility of this idea with the treaty.

These are the basic reasons why critics have said that SALT II would freeze us in a position of inferiority, and deny us an opportunity to redress the balance before the critical period of the early 1980's, when all the indices would have turned against us.

As to the problem of verifiability, several thoughtful students of the subject have expressed the view that technological developments have by now made it altogether impossible to regulate nuclear arms by verifiable arms-control treaties. There is certainly merit in their contention. For example, what are politely called "national means of verification"—satellite photography and electronic surveillance, largely—cannot answer many of the questions posed by the newer technologies. And satellites themselves have become vulnerable, a development Paul Warnke has called "alarming." No camera can tell how many separate warheads are carried by a single missile, or measure its thrust, its accuracy, or the explosive power of the weapons it carries. Nor can it see or otherwise identify the missiles kept in warehouses or factories, although missiles can be fired from such locations as well as from launchers, and can be deployed quickly in crisis situations to change the equations of deterrence.

IV

The administration was campaigning hard to sell the SALT treaty even before it was negotiated. That campaign has given rise to a large number of speeches, memoranda, and articles pleading the case for SALT II. Among them, Jan M. Lodal's recent piece* is typical in outlook and more detailed than most in analysis. It invokes three of the same criteria for judgment used here: (1) that the treaty contribute to the stability of the strategic balance; (2) that it be verifiable by national means; and (3) that it not adversely affect the security of our allies. But Mr. Lodal seems to reach a different conclusion. I say "seems to reach" because his treatment of each issue supports a negative judgment on the treaty; nonetheless, at the end Mr. Lodal says that SALT II cannot "be opposed on its technical merits."

*"SALT II and American Security," *Foreign Affairs*, Winter 1978-79, pp. 245-68.

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1. In contending that SALT II would contribute to strategic stability, Mr. Lodal points to the fact that the treaty specifies an equal number of launchers for both sides. He does not consider the problem posed by the agreement not to include the Soviet Backfire bomber—which, as already mentioned, can be targeted against the entire United States—in the number of bombers permitted under the treaty. But more important, he ignores the fact that the treaty does not cover the manufacture and storage of missiles. As Paul Nitze has commented, "The basic currency of the negotiations . . . became limits on the number of launchers, not limits on missiles and their characteristics." This, adds Nitze, "has proven to be the wrong currency." Obviously, no situation can be considered stable if it can be changed in hours by the movement of missiles from warehouses to launchers, some of which are already mobile, as Mr. Lodal himself notes.

Mr. Lodal concedes that by the early 1980's the Soviet Union will lead the United States by most measures of nuclear power. We will be ahead only in the relative number of warheads deployed—and that lead will be diminishing rapidly. And Mr. Lodal also admits the main point—that the Soviet Union will soon have the capacity to destroy our ICBM sites, airfields, and other military targets with a fraction of their ICBM force. He argues, however, that by the mid-1980's our airborne cruise missiles, if they are developed successfully, would significantly offset Soviet superiority in ICBM's and thus maintain stability. He does not consider the vulnerability of our bomber-cruise-missile system (based on the aging B-52) to various kinds of attack. In fact, he does not mention Soviet active defenses at all, nor does he consider their grave implications for stability.

Mr. Lodal's position would be that such vulnerabilities are not significant. His ultimate contention is that the possibility of retaliation against Soviet cities and other soft targets, using our submarine-launched missiles, assures strategic stability even in the face of the growth of the MIRVed Soviet ICBM force. He does not mention the disquieting reports, which have now become public, of Soviet gains in anti-submarine warfare.

He does, however, grant that the assumptions of the McNamara doctrine are now subject to "serious argument" and that no President would want to face a crisis with only the options of doing nothing or launching an all-out attack on Soviet cities. Nevertheless, that is exactly the position he accepts. He dismisses the bearing of Soviet civil-defense programs on strategic stability in a footnote, suggesting that we could substantially offset the Soviet advantages derived from their programs of civil defense by using a small number of heavier bombs with high radioactive fallout—a most unattractive possibility, and totally inadequate to boot. And he even contends that after we have deployed cruise missiles and MX—it is hoped by the late 1980's—we could counter a Soviet threat by launching a counterforce first strike of our own. This is the course we refused to consider during the period of our nuclear monopoly. To suggest it now is the counsel of desperation.

Mr. Lodal concludes that unless the Soviet Union agrees early in the SALT III negotiations to significant reductions in land-based ICBM's, "the strategic balance in the mid-1980's is likely to be determined to a much greater extent by the force-deployment programs of the two sides than it is by the provisions of arms-control agreements." Since he also observes that the Soviet Union cannot be expected to make unilateral concessions simply because we have chosen to forgo certain programs of our own, it is difficult to see how Mr. Lodal's argument supports his conclusion that SALT II would contribute to strategic stability.

2. With regard to verification, Mr. Lodal's case is equally mystifying. He does not mention Secretary Brown's public warnings about the Soviet capacity to destroy our satellites. Nor does he mention missiles kept in reserve, which are not covered by the agreement and cannot be verified by national means.

Mr. Lodal takes at face value the provisions in the treaty purporting to limit the number of warheads on missiles and their throw-weights. But he admits that we could not verify compliance with such limits, unless the Soviets should agree to cooperative procedures for verification. As of this writing, they have not done so. Yet Mr. Lodal has confidence in the possibility of Soviet cooperation in verification. He bases this confidence on two instances of Soviet "cooperation"—their agreement to rules through which we might distinguish heavy bombers carrying weapons from those used as tankers; and the Soviet promise not to deploy intercontinental SS-16 ICBM's. The SS-16's are indistinguishable from SS-20's, the mobile, MIRVed, intermediate-range missiles now causing so much alarm in Europe. The SS-20's can easily be converted into SS-16's by adding another stage. This gives the Soviet Union the capacity to break out of the limits of the treaty rapidly. It is hard therefore to understand Mr. Lodal's satisfaction in the Soviet "concession." It hardly makes the counting process verifiable by national means.

3. Mr. Lodal admits that European concern with the implications of SALT II for the defense of Europe is justified in view of the massive Soviet deployment of conventional and theater-nuclear arms (including chemical-warfare equipment) facing Europe. The answer, he says lamely, is that Europe must accept "the proposition that the 'nuclear umbrella' can go only so far in providing security for Europe," and that Europe must improve its conventional forces. And he hopes that the SALT III negotiations will correct the present NATO imbalance, assure European security, and prevent the decoupling of the alliance.

Given the nature of Soviet negotiating habits, it

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is hard to detect any basis for such hopes. If we could not prevent a weakening of our nuclear relation with Europe during the SALT II negotiations, how could we expect to do so during the SALT III negotiations, when our military position, and therefore our bargaining position, are expected to be weaker?

V

THE security implications of nuclear weapons, however, go far beyond the question of intercontinental nuclear exchanges between the United States and the Soviet Union, the subject to which SALT II is confined. The United States nuclear arsenal is the fulcrum on which the possibility of deterrence at every level depends. To change the metaphor, it is the center of a web of relationships which define the political as well as the military power of the United States. The SALT II treaty cannot be judged in isolation, because the universe of nuclear weapons is not a self-contained and disagreeable subject, isolated from the daily business of government. SALT II poses the ultimate question of national security, the connection between military power and political influence.

To repeat it once again, the goal of our nuclear weapons is to deter the use of, or the credible threat to use, nuclear arms in world politics. But the mission of our nuclear forces goes beyond making it too expensive for the Soviet Union to consider launching a nuclear attack against the United States. They must also provide a nuclear guarantee for our interests in many parts of the world, and make it possible for us to defend those interests by diplomacy or by the use of theater military forces whenever such action becomes necessary. The preceding sentence deserves underlining, for most people do not yet realize the many connections between the strategic nuclear balance, on the one hand, and ordinary diplomacy and the use of conventional and other theater forces in aid of diplomacy, on the other. Behind the shield of our second-strike capability, we carry on the foreign policy of a nation with global interests, and defend them if necessary by conventional means or theater forces.

Secretary of State Dulles tried to change this policy by announcing the doctrine of "massive retaliation." We should not fight protracted land wars, he said, in places chosen by the Soviet Union for confrontation, but use our nuclear power instead to strike at the Soviet Union, the source of the danger. It was an empty threat. In fighting border wars, where absolutely vital American interests were not at issue, we were unwilling to consider using nuclear weapons against the Soviet Union, even during the period of our nuclear superiority. This policy is rooted in our national character and the nature of our civilization. It will not change. Even where the defense of Europe is concerned, our reflex response to the change in the nuclear balance is to enlarge NATO conventional forces, to reduce the risk that nuclear weapons would have to be used in the event of a Soviet attack.

The Soviet doctrine with regard to the utility of nuclear weapons is quite different. As we are finally beginning to realize, the Soviets are not interested in mutual deterrence and nuclear stalemate. To the Soviets, clear nuclear superiority is the ultimate weapon of coercive diplomacy—the Queen of their chess set, through which they think they could achieve checkmate without having to fight either a nuclear or a conventional war.*

Effective American nuclear deterrence alone cannot keep the Soviet Union from using conventional forces, at least against targets they think we regard as secondary, like Korea, Vietnam, or Ethiopia. In most such situations, except for massive attacks on our most vital interests, like Western Europe or Japan, defense has to be provided by conventional forces in the first instance. But the absence of effective American nuclear deterrence—that is, the erosion or neutralization of our second-strike capability—would deny all credibility to our *conventional*-force deterrent. No one would believe that we would send in the Marines if they could be counterattacked by locally superior Soviet or satellite troops and our second-strike capability was in doubt.

THE point is brought out by a quick review of our experience with the problem since 1945.

In the early postwar years, we had a monopoly of nuclear weapons. And for a decade or so after that—until the middle or late 60's—we had overwhelming nuclear superiority. Nonetheless, in that period we had to deal with a long series of Soviet-managed attacks on our interests, from the early threats to Iran, Greece, and Turkey to the Berlin airlift, the war in Korea, the Cuban missile crisis, the war in Indochina, and the recurrent crises in the Middle East and Africa.

We dealt with those threats by diplomacy or, when diplomacy failed, by the use of, or the credible threat to use, conventional forces. But the nuclear weapon was always the decisive factor in the background. During the Berlin airlift, the shadow of our nuclear monopoly kept the Soviets from firing on the allied planes, and then persuaded the Soviet Union to end the blockade. The exercise had too many uncertainties and had become too risky, so the Soviet Union gave it up.

The essence of the problem is illustrated by the Cuban missile crisis of 1962. There, the Soviet Union secretly undertook to introduce land-based nuclear missiles into Cuba, in violation of their assurances to us, and in the face of private and public warnings from the President of the United States. Such action would have altered the basic

* See "Why the Soviet Union Thinks It Could Fight and Win a Nuclear War" by Richard Pipes, COMMENTARY, July 1977.

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equation of nuclear deterrence, and gravely affected the credibility and effectiveness of American diplomatic warnings to the Soviet Union. At that time, we had unchallengeable nuclear superiority. If there had been a nuclear exchange, the Soviet Union would have suffered about 100 million casualties and the United States 10 million. We had equally obvious conventional-force superiority in the area. If we had invaded Cuba, the Soviet Union could not have opposed the invasion effectively with either conventional or nuclear forces. By mobilizing an invasion force in Florida and instituting a limited naval blockade of Cuba, we demonstrated our will to insist on the evacuation of the Soviet missiles from Cuba, at a minimum. Confronted by these realities, the Soviet Union backed down.

Since the late 50's, the Soviet Union has been engaged in a massive military buildup, both in nuclear and conventional forces, designed to reverse the relationships which determined the outcome of the Berlin airlift, the Korean war, and the Cuban missile crisis. It is a buildup without parallel in modern history. Over the last sixteen years it has been proceeding steadily at a rate of at least 4 per cent to 5 per cent a year in real terms. In strategic weapons, the rate of increase has been at least 8 per cent a year. Increases compounded at the rate of 5 per cent or 8 per cent a year over so long a period make the Soviet military establishment formidable and sinister.

The first result of this Soviet buildup was evident in Vietnam. In the late 60's and early 70's, our nuclear superiority was no longer so evident as it had been at the time of the Cuban missile crisis; indeed, superiority had given way to stalemate. The deterioration of our nuclear advantage led to the erosion of our position and profoundly affected the final stages of the conflict.

There can be no question that since Vietnam our nuclear position has slipped from stalemate to the borders of inferiority. While the experts argue about whether we are already inferior to the Soviet Union in overall nuclear power, they are agreed that if present trends continue we shall be significantly inferior—and soon. Some careful studies contend that the strategic force relationships which dominated the Cuban missile crisis will soon be reversed, unless we undertake a crash program immediately—that in the event of a nuclear exchange we should risk 100 million casualties and the Soviet Union 10 million. Even if the figure were 100 to 20 or 30, it is not difficult to anticipate what would happen if we were to allow such a situation to develop. A perceptive student of the problem has remarked that, confronting such a scenario, even General Curtis LeMay would advise "accommodation." Our foreign policy and our conventional forces would be impotent, and we would acquiesce.

It is the first objective of Soviet policy to achieve such a situation. This—not nuclear war itself—is what our nuclear-weapons program and the SALT negotiations are all about. The Soviets have prolonged the negotiations over SALT II as long as possible—just as Hitler prolonged arms-control negotiations in the 30's—since we continue to mark time in our own military and political programs during SALT negotiations, and obligingly make decisions, like the cancellation of B-1, the postponement of MX and Trident, and the deferring of the enhanced-radiation warhead (the so-called neutron bomb), in the vain hope of inducing similar restraint on the Soviet side. The Soviets view SALT II as a major instrument for lulling American anxieties until it is too late to do anything to reduce them. Meanwhile, they move rapidly and effectively to seize control of the entire Persian Gulf area in the belief that such a position would permit them to bring Europe, Japan, and the Arab world to their knees because the United States would not have the usable military power to oppose it.

Many tend to dismiss the vision of nuclear war as unthinkable. But the vision of Soviet political coercion, backed by overwhelming nuclear and conventional forces, is so far from unthinkable as to have become a likely possibility, thanks to the drift of American foreign and defense policy in the post-Vietnam period.

VI

THE debate over ratification of the SALT II treaty requires Congress and the American people to pass judgment on that policy as a whole. It is the only context in which the problem of nuclear arms becomes intelligible.

At the present time our foreign and defense policy is rich in contradictions. On the one hand, the President says that all our security treaties will be honored as in our national interest. On the other hand, he refuses to ask for the naval forces which would be necessary to fulfill those treaties, in view of the size of the Soviet navy and other military forces, and the nature of the Soviet Union's policy of indefinite expansion into the military vacuums of world politics. There are many other such paradoxes—the withdrawal of our ground forces from Korea, for example. Does that step mean that the President is prepared to use nuclear weapons if necessary to stop an attack on an area vital to the security of Japan? The list could be extended indefinitely, from our refusal to cooperate in the restoration of a stable monetary system to the passivity of our response to Soviet actions in Africa and the Persian Gulf area.

The actions and vocabulary of the Carter administration in the field of foreign and defense policy derive from two entirely different conceptions of the national interest. On the one hand, many cling to the 19th-century isolationist view, given new life (and a new rhetoric) by the Vietnam catastrophe, that the United States can be safe, perhaps with our Western European friends,

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as a small, rich, industrialized enclave in a world dominated by hostile forces. The major premise of the alternative theory, which has dominated our foreign policy from Truman's day, is that the United States can continue to develop as a free and open society only in a stable world order, a world of wide horizons, in which aggression is prevented, or defeated when it occurs, by collective security and other arrangements of collective defense; a world in which political, social, and economic progress is sought by international cooperation; and one in which the United States necessarily plays a full and responsible part.

These two conceptions of American foreign policy cannot be reconciled or compromised.

Thus far, however, President Carter has refused to choose between them. In recent months, his words have sounded more Trumanesque, but his actions have remained McGovernite. Many believe that a clear choice would revive the divisions in the nation, particularly in the Democratic party, which exploded with such force during the final stages of the Vietnam war. The President has preferred to let sleeping dogs lie.

That comfortable posture has become impossible. The pressures of Soviet policy at a dozen points around the world, most particularly the bold Soviet thrust in the Persian Gulf region, would make it suicidal to continue on such a course. Yet the SALT II agreement, coupled with our continued retreats and withdrawals, and the inadequacy of our military programs, would also make it nearly impossible for us to restore and stabilize the world balance of power on which our safety as a nation depends.

Some experts in the field assume that we must accept SALT II despite its potential for condemning us to strategic inferiority, because the American people are unwilling to take "the giant strides forward" which would be required to assure nuclear parity and to maintain a credible and usable second-strike capacity. This defeatism is altogether unwarranted. The American people will spend and do whatever is required to assure the safety of the nation, if their leaders tell them the truth, as President Truman did, and explain the central importance of nuclear weapons to our security and to the foreign policies we employ to protect it.

BECAUSE the debate over SALT II presents a unique opportunity for telling this truth, it may well become a major turning-point for the future. If, mesmerized by old illusions about disarmament and new ones about détente, we accept the treaty, we will be taking not a step toward peace but a leap toward the day when a President of the United States will have to choose between the surrender of vital national interests and nuclear holocaust. No President should ever be put into such a corner. But if, overcoming these illusions, we permit ourselves to see the SALT II treaty for what it truly is—an expression of American acquiescence in the Soviet drive for overwhelming military superiority—we will give ourselves a last chance to restore the strategic balance that is the only guarantee of peace in the nuclear age and the only context in which the survival of our civilization and its values can be safely assured.

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Singer's Paradoxical Progress

Ruth R. Wisse

THE award to Isaac Bashevis Singer of the Nobel Prize for Literature brings to a climax the most fortunate career in modern Yiddish letters. With deference to Singer's demons, it would be only proper to spit three times upon such provocation, and to dispel their impish envy with the formula, may no evil eye behold him. But the occasion should be marked for rejoicing, especially since the decline of the language in which Singer writes, the destruction of his community, and the thwarted fate of many of his fellow Yiddish writers have so often required the compassionate tones of mourning.

The emphasis on loss and decline may seem inevitable in any discussion of Bashevis Singer's work: the gloom is in either the subject or the writer, or both. Idyllic stories of the East European Jewish *shtetl,* like "Short Friday" or "The Little Shoemakers," vivify a world whose beatific fictional existence is set into fiercely tragic perspective by its historical extinction. Most of Singer's stories inspire a fresh awareness of human malignancy and remorseless fate. The author's fatalism is prominent in large novels, like *The Family Moskat,* which trace the disintegration of modern Jewish society through a series of characters who gravitate unerringly toward their doom. As Singer has often remarked, the pessimist is the realist. His unblinking realistic eye has noted this century's unholy marvels, including those special revelations it has offered the Jew.

Yet the progress of Singer as a professional writer is an unusually happy study. His first published story, submitted under a pseudonym to the literary contest of a Warsaw weekly in 1925 when he was twenty-one, was a prizewinning entry.* A year later he was the youngest of forty-six contributors to the massive anthology, *Warshever Shriftn,* establishing his literary presence among the major Yiddish writers of the period. His first novel, *Satan in Goray,* published serially in a local magazine, was issued in book form by the Library of the Yiddish PEN Club in 1935, the first volume of what was to have become a series of annual stellar publications. Singer had the prescience and good fortune to leave Warsaw in the mid 1930's for New York, where, after a period of dislocation, he became a regular contributor to the *Jewish Daily Forward,* the only moderately secure affiliation ever afforded to the Yiddish writer. He was able, on the *Forward,* to cultivate two literary voices—that of "Warshavsky," the feuilletonist and personal chronicler, and that of "Bashevis," the writer and novelist—finding for each an appreciative audience. Lastly, and by no means least, he was "discovered" in the early 1950's by Irving Howe, the editors of COMMENTARY and *Partisan Review,* and the late Cecil Hemley of the Noonday Press, and set aloft on the wave of fame that nowhere swells so high and fast as in America. The Nobel Prize for Literature confers international recognition and honor upon a writer who has gone "from strength to strength."

More compelling than the story of his reputation is that of Singer's literary progress. Though he presents himself to his American audiences as a rather puckish character, musing about demons, asking for explanations of a difficult term like "modernism," parrying with quips and aphorisms the questions addressed to him as if to an oracle, Singer is really a thoroughly professional literary man who has carefully considered the nature of his craft. Plunged into the thick of Jewish cultural life in his late adolescence, he served an excellent artistic apprenticeship, becoming one of the first and few Yiddish writers to make his living—meager though it sometimes was—solely by the pen.

Bashevis Singer became a writer in the heyday of Yiddish literature in the 1920's at what was undoubtedly its geographic center: Warsaw, capital of the new Republic of Poland, a city whose 300,000 Jews constituted about one-third of the total population. The classical period of Yiddish literature had come to a sudden end with World War I, when the three giants—I.L. Peretz, Sholem

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* For this interesting detail, I am indebted to Khone Shmeruk's introduction to *Der shpigl un andere dertseylungen,* a collection of Singer's first-person narratives, issued by the Hebrew University, 1975.

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Aleichem, and Mendele Mocher Sforim—died in rapid succession between 1915 and 1917. Under Peretz's guiding and often autocratic rule—his disciples called him their "*rebbe*"—his home in Warsaw had become the heart of a spirited cultural renaissance. Although emigration and shifting political borders in the postwar years greatly affected Jewish demography, Warsaw remained the mecca of Yiddish letters until the 1939 German invasion.

When Singer first began to publish in 1925, there were in Warsaw a number of important Yiddish dailies, representing the spectrum of Jewish ideologies and a considerable journalistic range from photo-express sensationalism to high-quality coverage and editorial analysis. Singer found employment with *Literarishe Bleter*, the most prestigious literary weekly ever published in Yiddish. He was soon a full-fledged member of the Union of Jewish Writers and Journalists, which boasted a membership of about 300 professionals, sponsored hundreds of literary evenings, published its own anthologies, and provided an around-the-clock meeting place for discussion and drink. To be a Yiddish writer in Warsaw, said the poet, Melekh Ravitch, when he arrived there from Vienna after World War I, was "to feel the Redemption at hand, and to be at its center."

IN ADDITION to being well situated for a literary debut in Yiddish, Singer also witnessed in his own family a microcosmic drama of the conflict between Jewish tradition and worldliness, which was the main subject and stimulus of modern Jewish writing. Few writers, whether in Hebrew or Yiddish, have emerged from so thoroughly "old-fashioned" and learned a home. As Singer himself has explained, the Jewish *shtetl* of Poland experienced the Enlightenment, the *Haskalah*, much later and with greater suddenness than did similar communities of Russia and Lithuania, where so many Jewish writers had originated:

> Until 1914 most *shtetlakh* in Poland remained observant (*frum*). Jews lived as they had hundreds of years earlier. . . . The Enlightenment as a mass movement came to Poland with World War I, and because of its delay and momentum, assumed almost epidemic proportions. The revolution in Russia, the arrival of the Germans and the Austrians, the creation of the Polish Republic, the Balfour Declaration—all of this had a simultaneous impact. Processes that elsewhere lasted several decades here transpired virtually overnight.*

Singer's first-hand familiarity with the "pre-Enlightenment" Polish *shtetl* and his upbringing in a bookish as well as a pious home gave him immediate access to Jewish folkways and literary sources from which Jewish writers, even of the preceding generation, had felt themselves rather removed. Back in the 1890's, I.L. Peretz and his friends were already collecting from outlying areas folk materials that could be reworked in modern literary forms. Some of the impetus for S. An-ski's haunting drama, *The Dybbuk*, derived from the ethnographic expedition that the author had undertaken to gather materials thought to be in danger of disappearing. As Singer has described his home, much of this endangered lore was the daily stuff of his life, his for the taking.

If his parents, a small-town rabbi and rabbi's daughter, and the various visiting and visited relatives remained a wellspring of tradition, Singer's older sister, Esther, and his brother, Israel Joshua, soon introduced the challenge of secular modernity. Israel Joshua, a draft evader during the war for reasons of conscience, was caught up by the excitement of the Bolshevik revolution and began his literary career under its spell. Later in Warsaw, he was a prominent companion of "The Gang" (*Di Khaliastre*), a determinedly innovative group of Yiddish writers who took as their bible the *Ethics* of Spinoza, and as their literary model the expressionistic bravado of the Russian poet, Mayakovsky. Before Bashevis Singer attempted the passage from home, his older brother had already publicly rejected the Jewish God and braved the heady atmosphere of the artistic world. Of the clashes between generations in his home, Singer was to say: "Although later in my life I read a great deal of philosophy, I never found more compelling arguments than those that came up in my own kitchen."

While the example of Israel Joshua no doubt facilitated the transition of young Isaac from *Yeshiva bokher* to Yiddish writer, it also preempted some of the younger writer's independent initiative in this direction. In order to step out on his own, Bashevis had not only to reject the assumptions of his parents, but also those of his brother who was intimidatingly talented and famous. It was necessary to separate himself from both his home and from the new "revolutionary" circles in which his brother played such a prominent role. And, in fact, though Singer fell in with some trends of his day—the naturalistic impulse to show the seamy side of life and to emphasize its sexuality; the attraction to Spinoza, vegetarianism, pacifism—he was among the very few to oppose political ideologies, whether nationalist or socialist. Even more solitary was his opposition to literary modernism as a means of expressing the unease and disjunction of the 1920's. His earliest published story, about a man's precipitous decline, ends in a shocking scene: the ailing father is asked by his daughter, a prostitute, to roll over in bed so that she might use its other half for her trade. This was certainly an attack on the values of modesty in which Singer was raised. At the same time, the spare, direct narrative style of this and all the

* "*Arum der yidisher literatur in poyln*" ("Concerning Yiddish Literature in Poland"), *Zukunft*, August 1943.

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rest of his work repudiated current vogues of impressionism and expressionism, while the emphasis on character rather than social conditioning called into question all faiths in a new world order.

His position between the contending values of a traditional past and an ideologically-impelled future seems to have endowed Singer with a curious detachment, curious certainly within the mainstream of Jewish literature which took any number of directions but was invariably *engagé*. More onlooker than participant, Singer has seen the forces of opposing ideas canceling one another out, much as in his works the charm of one beloved is soon deflected by the lure of another and then, invariably, by yet a third. Singer has referred to himself as "unsentimental." He did not nurse ideals that could be shattered, or trust the human condition enough to believe in ultimate remedies. The habit of skepticism, though it has sometimes chilled Singer's work to the bone, made him an exceptionally steady recording secretary for his times.

From the outset, Singer defined his craft not in terms of possibilities but in terms of limitations. In the manner of a proper *halakhic* Jew, he first set up the fence of restrictions before exploring the opportunities within its bounds. Though he has experimented in a number of genres over the years, and expanded his two original locales, the old world and the new, to include a third, the beyond, he remains surprisingly true to his earliest literary ideas.

For Bashevis Singer, literature is realism and realism demands a narrative that depicts and speaks for itself. "The description, the given fact, was always the attribute of the realistic narrative," wrote Singer in a 1927 essay, "just as sentiment and mood are dominant in the lyric."* The poet may *react* to events, but the prose realist sets up the events themselves, leaving reaction to the reader. The fiction writer is sentenced to details, and "the subtler the intended mood, the more details . . . he must artfully combine." The realist must deal with objective facts; only in dialogue, in the exchange of voices, do we have a "tiny window" into the unseen inner life of the characters.

Singer's endorsement of realism is in large measure an attack upon the moderns, particularly the expressionists, who wished "to tear down all barriers and penetrate directly to the very essence." He considers their exhibitionistic art intrinsically inferior to that of the consistent realist like himself, who accepts the binding limitations of narration as the first condition of success. "In graphic form it isn't possible to render everything, but everything in a realistic narrative must be given graphic form."

While submitting to its restraints, Singer raises some traditional objections to realism which also express his own impatience. Can objective descriptions really communicate the full complexity of the individual? What about the intellectual who thinks more than he acts: can realism do him justice, or must it favor the folk type? Is there no other direct source for the artist apart from the natural world, apprehended through the senses? These questions clearly anticipate the author's attempted solutions. Like the libertines of his stories who require a social context of propriety, Singer defines a thoroughly conservative norm which he may then bedevil and transgress.

He soon began to use historical chronicles, folk tales, and the supernatural to explore those subjects and ideas that could not be treated with sufficient freedom in contemporary realistic settings. His "chronicles" do obey the laws of objective narration, his imps are kept dutifully subject to the same laws of fiction that govern their human victims. Yet in these stories, the very normalcy of the form undercuts the assumptions of materialism and natural reason on which literary realism rests. Erotic impulses and subconscious desires are embodied in androgynous, lesbian, sadistic, and murderous creatures whose substantive existence is portrayed in such "authentic" and charming detail of language and setting that they seem not only real, but commonplace. The apparent simplicity of Singer's narrative form, like the innocence of his characters, is only the better to call them into question with.

Satan in Goray, the greatest of Singer's novels, moves into a semi-legendary past to draw a bead on contemporary reality. Hailed upon its appearance for its incomparable mastery of language and style, the book was called an "anachronism," a judgment for which the author himself was largely responsible. Singer subtitled his novel, "a story of long ago," and drew attention to its antique properties.

In an article, "On the Question of Poetry and Politics," which was published almost concurrently with the novel in *Globus*, the same magazine where it first appeared, Singer lashed out against the political pressures that were demanding allegiance from the writer. One side cries, how can *you*, of all people, look calmly down from your Olympian heights while the poor and dispossessed rise up against their oppressors? The other side cries, how can *you*, creator and bearer of culture, witness the destruction of European culture without coming wholeheartedly to its defense? Each side exhorts the writer to produce works that set men against one another, class against class, group against group. Well, says Singer, the true artist will never become a propagandist. "Not only will he refuse to incite the rich against the poor, he will even refuse to incite the poor against the rich." Singer is particularly cynical about the pressure applied to artists in the Soviet Union. With some foresight, he writes:

* *"Verter oder bilder"* ("Words or Images") *in Literarishe Bleter*, 1927, no. 34.

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> The recent easing of demands for a Prolet-Cult in the Soviet Union is merely the result of a temporary pacifistic and constructive mood. . . . As soon as the battle is joined, there will certainly be categorical demands made upon the writer to serve as effectively and single-mindedly with his pen as the soldier must with his rifle. Similar demands will undoubtedly be made by the other side.

Taking for his motto the proposition of Spinoza that "Hatred can never be good," Singer insists that the writer is too pessimistic, or realistic, to trust the promises of politicians, who have amassed enough power without the writer's help.

Of course in the narrow sense, *Satan in Goray* is an entirely apolitical book. It tells of the messianic fervor that seizes and corrupts a small 17th-century Polish town, unleashing passions that the Law and the calm of reason had formerly kept in check. It shows the community of Goray, weakened physically and hence spiritually by the devastation of the Chmielnitski pogroms, unable to withstand the apocalyptic ideology of the followers of Sabbatai Zevi. The poison of false hope infects the town and then runs its course like an epidemic before its power is finally spent. So thickly embedded is the book in historical detail; so intricate are its recreations of the old Jewish epistolary, homiletic, and chronicle styles; so richly individualized are the characterizations of even the minor figures, that it resists any notion of "allegory": it is too much itself to be the symbolic representation of something other than itself.

Yet this may well be the most powerful political novel of the 1930's. Singer's hatred of ideologies, those sweeping solutions to the problems of mankind that lack all tolerance for the human reality, animates this "ancient chronicle" and transforms it into a frighteningly modern work. Singer had removed the artist from the political arena except as referee or judge, and praised the pacifist neutrality of Erich Maria Remarque, whose anti-war novel, *All Quiet on the Western Front*, he himself translated into Yiddish. His own modern parable rages not against war, but against the incendiary ideas that in the name of a higher spirituality flood the world with hatred enough to bring it to ruin.

The attraction to the frenzy of the Sabbatean movement finds its parallel in the works of many contemporaries, most important among them Gershom Scholem, whose historical interest was also spurred by his perception of contemporary obsessions. Whereas Scholem has dedicated himself to understanding the Sabbatean phenomenon in its precise detail and broadest social implications, Singer bends history to heighten the irrational—man's fearsome lack of control and susceptibility to mad persuasion. Once he has released the fiction, though, Singer reimposes upon it a strict moral and narrative rein. The novel concludes in the homiletic style of the chronicles, bringing villains to judgment, good men to easeful death, and the universe back to order: "Let none attempt to force the Lord."

SINGER's most conservative literary pronouncements pertain to the uses of Yiddish. In 1943 the New York literary monthly, *Svive*, published his essay on "The Problems of Yiddish Prose in America" with a rare editorial footnote indicating that the opinions of the author were not those of the magazine and that contrary views would be expressed in the coming issues. The article touched off a barrage of dissenting replies and provoked more anger in Jewish literary circles than Singer's discomfiting eroticism.

According to Singer's analysis, Yiddish in America is a language in serious decline. A language is decaying when people consign it to particular functions. "Life itself is rich and varied, yet there is hardly a Jew in America who can name in Yiddish all that he sees or feels." What is more, Yiddish speakers in America represent only a small fraction of American Jewry, a limited class. How can the Yiddish writer depict Jewish doctors and farmers when no one uses the language in those spheres of work?

Singer compares the handicaps of the Yiddish writer in America with those of the Hebrew writer at the turn of the century who lacked the simplest idioms of everyday speech. It was clumsy when the Hebrew writer had his wagon driver curse his horse with the phrase, "Move thither, son of Belial!" It is equally inappropriate when rich Yiddish expressions flow from the mouths of contemporary American characters who would actually be speaking and thinking in English. This explains, says Singer, why the best Yiddish prose writers consciously or unconsciously avoid writing about American life. They don't want to fake the dialogue, and they are fed up with describing yet again the narrow circle of coarse, aging immigrants.

Not content with this severe circumscription of Yiddish fiction, Singer redefines the whole sphere of Yiddish, retroactively and for all time. Yiddish developed in the home, the House of Study, the shop, and the artisan's workroom. Those Jews who attained wealth or who aspired to be thoroughly worldly proceeded to other cultures and other languages:

> A language that is not taught in elementary schools, high schools, and universities; a language into which the classic works of knowledge have not yet been translated; a language that is not used on the farm and in the factory, in the building of trains and bridges, automobiles and airplanes, does not serve any worldly interests.

Singer mocks the efforts of the philologists of the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research and others who are creating neologisms that no one will use.

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This still leaves the Yiddish writer a marvelous 500-year heritage in which he will discover "Judaism in all its splendor." And Singer exempts from his prescription the lyrical poet, "who is not obliged to any hero other than himself." But the prose writer, who must develop a broad cast of characters, has to yield to linguistic pressures, recognizing that he is a slave to the past, where Yiddish was thoroughly at home.

Whatever its partial validity, the severity of the argument strikes the reader as forcefully as its truths. Taking his opposition to modernity one step further than before, Singer plucks Yiddish prose out of the 20th century to move it back to its roots, to a culture ruled by the impulses of evil and good rather than by the id and the superego, or fascism and democracy. In a way, Singer seems to be entering a linguistic monastery that will forever protect him from the ravages of earthly time. By voluntarily immuring himself in the Jewish past, he does not have to face the actual forces that had already, by April 1943, plucked Yiddish speakers out of the 20th century: the war is not mentioned. The displaced harshness of his analysis (he himself would later write a considerable body of American work) serves as a kind of justification for returning artistically to a world he had abandoned in fact.

As might be expected, the old-fashioned Yiddish stories Singer wrote during the war use an authentic Yiddish idiom for reasons other than the rediscovery of "Judaism in all its splendor." Such stories as "From the Diary of One Not Born," "Zeidlus the Pope," and "The Destruction of Kreshev," which were to have been collected in *Memoirs of the Spirit of Evil,* underscore the arbitrariness of evil, its imperviousness to the category of justice in which Jews so unyieldingly believe. For some readers the transposition of these categories of evil into a world that strove so vehemently to free itself from them, is insensitive or wrong. Reviewing Singer in 1965, Dan Jacobson wrote:

> I cannot help feeling that to some extent Singer is forced to import evil, as it were, into a world which cannot really contain or express it. The evil which obsesses him is far greater than anything his poor peddlers, ambitious rabbis, lecherous widows, grasping merchants, or their apostate sons are capable of committing . . . *they* did not gas children, burn them alive, machine gun them into pits.*

Others have justified Singer's method, noting that in these traditional Jewish settings, the demonic still retains the power to anger and shock. Whether or not the linguistic limitation of Yiddish actually forced Singer back to the Polish *shtetl,* that familiar setting provided him with the only convincing medium for the representation of sin on a still-human scale, with something like the "realism" the age required.

As his literary essays suggest, Bashevis Singer knows the sources of his strength. He is at his best within a conservative literary form, in an old-fashioned setting, and within tight linguistic constraints. Three of his finest works—the stories "Gimpel the Fool," "Taybele and Her Demon," and "The Spinoza of Market Street"—are tender tales of love. A solitary man or woman reaches out to an unlikely partner and finds, in the bitter sweetness of love, intimations of both mortality and transcendence. Some of Singer's plainest autobiographical sketches, published under the name of Warshavsky because they did not meet Bashevis's literary standards, have crashed American high culture with the charm of Cinderella at the ball.

In his long novels and contemporary stories, Singer suffers from some of his own biases. His distaste for modern secularism, abhorrence of ideologies, lack of interest in politics, and practical resistance to an updated Yiddish vocabulary make it difficult for him to treat with genuine complexity the characters he sets down in a complex world. A growing misanthropic tendency also limits his ability to breathe much compassion into his stories of passion. There is no lack of narrative suspense, though coincidence, impulse, and supernatural interference too often replace a reflective intelligence. The homey truths and sharp or soothing bits of wisdom that prove so satisfying in folk characters sound distressingly hollow in the mouths of modern Jews trying to make some sense of their fate.

Like his captivating magician of Lublin in the novel of the same name, Singer the artist does not feel wholly at ease in the big city. Yasha the magician leaves his faithful wife and the comfort of his *shtetl* to pursue the greater challenges of cosmopolitan Warsaw. Lusting after Gentile beauty and the homage of Gentile audiences, he falls ever deeper into sin in his efforts to attain them. Finally, to escape the world he both loves and fears, he returns home and walls himself up in penitential solitude. The choice between licentiousness and asceticism is made absolute, as if the only escape from the one were to the other.

The more Singer admits the modern world into his writing, the more forcefully he opposes its values and lures. In the most recent of his books to be translated into English, *Shosha,*† a semi-autobiographical novel of pre-war Poland, the author actually rewrites his life. Singer's hero, Aaron Greidinger, who bears an obvious resemblance to the author, is beset in his debut as a writer and a lover by a number of literary

* COMMENTARY, February 1965.

† Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 227 pp., $8.95.

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and amorous opportunities among which he is invited to choose. The hero selects not the representation of the woman Singer actually married, but Shosha, a childhood playmate who has remained small in size and naive in spirit—an eternal child. Shosha had briefly appeared as a sweet companion of childhood in one of Singer's earlier autobiographical story collections, *A Day of Pleasure*. Here she becomes his symbolic wife, the repository of untouched, old-world innocence that never passes through the modern slime at all; and she dies, simply expires, as the Jews begin their forced march to extinction.

The introduction of so pastoral a character into a novel that otherwise throbs with the frantic tempo and maddening insecurity of interwar Poland—quite as though Gimpel the Fool had been turned into the hero of one of Singer's contemporary novels, like *Enemies*—disturbs the book's coherence and its sense of truth. But for Singer, the choice of Shosha is obviously the very point. The artist-magician renounces the tightrope of all his worldly quest and embraces the trustful ingenuousness of the past as his one true bride. A strange "autobiography," that follows the road not taken, as if atoning for an actual, successful artistic career in the modern world by yoking itself in its fiction to the poorest, most unlikely possibility of all.

Der Bal Tshuve ("The Penitent"), 1974, a novel intended for Yiddish readers that is not likely to succeed in English, turns its back on the present with even more shameless zeal. The book is so very didactic that its narrator, a certain Joseph Shapiro who has emigrated from America to Israel, apologizes throughout his narrative for his homiletic and moralistic digressions. Shapiro accosts the famous author, Bashevis Singer —where else but at the Western Wall?—and in two long monologues on successive days tells him the story of his life: his rapid climb to prosperity in postwar America, his inevitable descent into profligacy, and his total repudiation of the sinful "vanity of vanities" in a sudden flight to Israel. Shapiro finds in modern Israel no more than an extension of America. The fact that the language is Hebrew and the statesmen are Jewish is no protection against sin.

Only in Mea Shearim, the Orthodox section of Jerusalem that is the closest contemporary approximation of the pre-Enlightenment *shtetl*, does Shapiro begin to find his salvation. At first he finds it difficult, as a faithless Jew, to participate in ritual and prayer. His Evil Spirit protests, "You are play-acting." But before long he is captivated by the unsophisticated generosity of the people and the perfect purity of their daughters. He becomes convinced of the genuine superiority of the traditional Jewish way of life and of his own ability to live it wholeheartedly. At this point he marries, and settles permanently in the quarter; his only connection to his former life is the need to communicate its follies.

It is hard to enumerate all the facets of modern life and thought that catch the brunt of the narrator's disgust. Lacking in plot or invention, the monologues are sustained by the stunning energy of their antipathy—to culture, to sociology, to psychology, to the youth cult and the sex cult, and especially to humanism, "the greatest lie in the world." "Humanism does not serve merely one idol; it serves *all* the idols." Only the religion of the Talmud can civilize man, by keeping him subject to its moral code. Shapiro, who despite a technical separation from the author clearly speaks with his full blessing, concludes with the perception that even if death should prove him wrong, if he should face an end without Judgment or Judge, he will have lived the final part of his life according to his convictions and his taste.

Singer's work draws its power from the tension between containment and license, Thou Shalt Not and I Must. At one time the formal austerity permitted thematic intemperance. More recently, where the work has grown loose and self-indulgent, the characters reach out for order to the imposed restraints of the anti-modern or pre-modern Jew. As Singer himself is feted with more worldly honor than he ever granted his characters, even in their dreams, he strikes loud and ever louder the note of renunciation. For a modern writer with such a distrust of modernity, this may be the only balance possible.

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American Politics, Then & Now

James Q. Wilson

THE administration of President Carter offers an appropriate occasion for asking a question that will be raised with growing frequency as this nation approaches the bicentennial observance of the writing of the Constitution: has the American political system changed fundamentally? If no accident befalls him, Jimmy Carter will be the first Democrat in this century to serve a full term in the White House without having to lead the nation into war or out of economic disaster. Indeed, the historical rarity of the present moment is even more striking: Carter is (so far) the first Democratic President since before the Civil War to serve a full term without either war or depression and to have a Democratic majority in both houses of Congress. The Carter administration offers, in this sense, an example of a "normal" administration in the hands of what has become the nation's dominant political party.

Would the political system inherited by President Carter be recognized by its architect, James Madison? Or by the powerful Republican Senators of the late 19th century? Or even by Harry Truman? We can turn to the *Federalist Papers* for an account of what that system was supposed to be in 1787; if that seems too antiquarian a source for the restlessly contemporary modern mind, we can turn to descriptions written a generation ago by leading journalists and political scientists.

In 1948, the late John Fischer published in *Harper's* magazine an article on the "Unwritten Rules of American Politics" that was at the time, and for many years thereafter, widely recognized as the best brief analysis of the distinctive features of American politics. He drew upon the writings of John C. Calhoun, the South Carolina politician and intellectual who nearly a century before had set forth the doctrine of the "concurrent majority." In Calhoun's time, of course, that doctrine was a defense of the Southern resistance to federal legislation aimed at restricting the spread of slavery, but Fischer, aided by the writings of Peter Drucker, found in the theory of the concurrent majority, stripped of its extremist and partisan language, an enduring and fundamental explanation of the American constitutional system.

That system was designed to preserve liberty and maintain a national union by a set of procedures meant to insure that no important decision would be reached without the concurrence of each interest vitally affected by that decision. In Congress, no important bloc would be voted down on any matter that touched its central concern. In nominating a presidential candidate, no one would be acceptable who was objectionable to any significant body of opinion within the party. In electing a President, both parties would sacrifice any interest in principle or policy to accommodate the views of the average voter and thus would almost always offer an echo, not a choice. Politics would be non-ideological, conflict would be minimized, and such policies as survived the process of interest-group bargaining would command widespread support and thus be likely to endure. All these were, to Fischer, the strengths of the system. It had costs as well—a disposition to inaction, a tendency to magnify the power of well-organized pressure groups, and a shortage of persons able to speak for the nation as a whole. But to Fischer, the strengths clearly outweighed the weaknesses, primarily because man is fallible: the very slowness of the system insured against the premature commitment to error. As Learned Hand once wrote, "The spirit of liberty is the spirit which is not too sure that it is right."

Fischer's concern for moderation, even at the price of inaction, was understandable in its time. In 1948, the Democratic party was split into three wings. Progressives (and the Communist party) were supporting Henry Wallace and Southern reactionaries were supporting J. Strom Thurmond, while beleaguered Harry Truman was struggling—as it turned out, successfully—to hold the Democratic middle.

PERSONS who believe that all this has changed point to the legislative explosion that occurred during the 1960's and early 1970's. Without benefit of a national emergency which in the past had always been necessary for the system of veto groups to be set aside, there

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poured forth from Congress an unprecedented wave of policy innovation. The Southern filibuster was broken and civil-rights bills became law. The caution of the House Ways and Means Committee was overcome and Medicare and Medicaid were passed. The fears of federal control of schools that for long prevented federal aid to education were set aside and such aid became a massive and growing reality. The War on Poverty, the model-cities program, and the rest of the Great Society legislation arrived, to be followed, toward the end of the 1960's, by the emergence of environmental and consumer legislation. Between 1966 and 1970, at least eighteen major consumer-protection laws and seven major air- and water-pollution laws were passed, and the activity continued well into the 1970's.

As important as the number of new programs adopted was the way in which they were adopted. The veto groups and congressional blocs that were thought to stand astride each checkpoint in the legislative process, letting nothing pass without first extracting every necessary concession, were scarcely to be found. The bill creating federal aid to education went through committee review and floor debate virtually without amendment, leading three Republicans on a House subcommittee to boycott the hearings on the bill because of the "hasty and superficial consideration" it was receiving. The original Medicare plan made provision only for paying the hospital bills of the elderly; Congress added a provision for public payment of doctors' bills as well. Congressional deliberations on the auto-safety bill of 1966 made that law, in virtually every particular, stronger than what the President had requested; when the conference committee considered the versions passed by the House and Senate, it resolved all remaining issues in favor of the tougher—that is, the more anti-industry—provision. By the end of the 1960's, the American Medical Association, long described as one of the most powerful interest groups in Washington, had been defeated and the automobile industry stood revealed, in Elizabeth Drew's phrase, as a "paper hippopotamus." Ralph Nader had become the best-known and perhaps the most powerful lobbyist in town.

II

THE opposite view is that, despite the frenzy of the 1960's, nothing of fundamental importance changed. The Carter Presidency has been functioning rather much like the Truman Presidency: unheroically, with little public enthusiasm, winning some battles and losing others. Liberal ideas of 1948, such as civil rights, national health insurance, and federal aid to education, were defeated; liberal ideas of 1976, such as national health insurance, welfare and tax revisions, and new labor laws, were likewise defeated. Though the nation was at peace in 1948 as in 1976, both Presidents were preoccupied in large measure with foreign affairs—the Marshall Plan, NATO, and international trade in the case of Truman; the Panama Canal, tension in the Middle East, and relations with Turkey in the case of Carter. Both Presidents saw Congress debate at length a bill to deregulate natural gas and neither President was able to get out of the debate exactly what he wanted. Truman vetoed a deregulation bill passed in 1950, Carter signed a compromise deregulation bill in 1978. During his first year in office, Carter won on 75 per cent of the congressional votes taken on his program, far lower than the level of support enjoyed by Eisenhower, Kennedy, or Johnson in their first or second years.

The "conservative coalition" of Republicans and Southern Democrats which has been the bane of liberal legislation was, according to the *Congressional Quarterly*, alive and well in the 95th Congress. During 1977, it appeared in about one-fourth the recorded votes in the House and Senate and won about two-thirds of the time that it appeared. Truman would not have been surprised.

The burst of legislation in the 1960's was not the result, in this skeptical view, of any profound change in American politics, but was simply a consequence of the Goldwater fiasco. The Lyndon Johnson victory in 1964 gave the Democrats so large a majority in Congress that Northern Democratic liberals acquired a control of Congress that formerly only a national crisis would produce. Northern Democrats could have passed the aid-to-education bill and come within a few votes of passing the Medicare bill even if every Republican and Southern Democrat had voted against them. Moreover, the Goldwater candidacy brought Republicans to power in parts of the South and thereby reduced the control that Southerners, by virtue of the seniority system, had once wielded in Congress. In 1962, Alabama had eight Democratic Congressmen; after 1964, only three were left.

The changes did not stop in 1964. Going into the 1966 election, Virginia may have had as much power in Congress as it had in the days of Madison and Monroe, 150 years earlier. Democrats from that state held the chairmanships of the Senate Finance Committee, the House Rules Committee, and the Senate Banking and Currency Committee. "After the election," writes Gary Orfield, "all were gone as the Old Dominion lost a century of seniority."

But with the 1970's, normalcy returned, and with it either (depending on one's political convictions) stagnation or prudence. The struggle over the energy bill was mountainous, and yet what the mountain brought forth was not even a mouse, but a Tinker Toy out of which a gifted administrator *might* be able to fashion a reasonable facsimile of a mouse. Congress has reasserted its

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influence over foreign affairs, in part by the enactment of five or six dozen provisions of foreign aid and other laws requiring congressional assent to presidential initiatives. Whatever vision one has of a fair and rational tax code, there seems little prospect of Congress transforming that vision into reality. Traditional porkbarrel bills, such as public works, continue to prosper in Congress; the only remarkable feature of the present day is that the President, for reasons not well understood even by leaders of his own party, has tried—with only limited success—to block some projects.

In short, once extraordinary majorities evaporate and national crises recede, it is politics as usual. Recently, Senator Edward M. Kennedy attacked Congress for being "the best money could buy" and criticized the profusion and influence of interest groups. Though Kennedy was deploring what Fischer had applauded, the categories of description were very much the same.

III

Both interpretations of American politics are partially correct. Congress remains able, long after the 1960's, to pass sweeping new laws almost without regard to the normal constraints of interest-group bargaining, as it did when it decided in 1978 to abolish mandatory retirement before age seventy or decided in 1973 to give absolute protection to endangered species. And Congress continues to experience great difficulty in formulating a coherent policy on matters such as taxation, energy, or school desegregation. As Anthony King has recently observed, our political system has acquired the contradictory tendencies of a human crowd—"to move either very sluggishly or with extreme speed."*

Three things account for the schizophrenia of contemporary politics: one is the greater ease with which decisions can be transferred from the private to the public sphere; a second is the "atomization," as King terms it, of political institutions; a third is a change in the governing ideas of our time. The first factor has caused the American law-making system to be in a state of permanent excitability; the second has made the outcome of any excitement difficult to predict; and the third has been the source of the energy that determines whether the system will be in its manic or depressive phase.

Madison and the other framers of the Constitution created, as everyone knows, a federal government designed to prevent the mischief of faction and the tyranny of temporary majorities by so arranging its institutions that ambition would be made to check ambition. Douglass C. North, the economic historian, has stated one consequence of the Madisonian system this way: in order to reduce the ability of interest groups to capture the government, the constitutional order attached a high cost to utilizing the political system as compared to the marketplace for making decisions. The "entry price" for politics was high, and thus only the largest or most popular factions were able to pay it. This price was both tangible and intangible. The material cost was the great effort required to organize groups (parties, factions, lobbies) influential enough to get an issue onto the agenda of Congress and to coordinate the decision of Congress (and its many parts) and the President. The non-material cost was the widespread belief that a large range of issues—public welfare, civil rights, the regulation of economic enterprise, even for a while the building of public works—was outside the legitimate scope of federal authority.

The late E. E. Schattschneider once observed that "he who decides what politics is about runs the country." Once politics was about only a few things; today, it is about nearly everything. There has been, in North's terms, a "drastic reduction in the cost of using the political process" relative to the cost of using, for similar results, the market. That reduction has been the result of easier access to the courts (by fee-shifting and class-action suits), the greater ease of financing interest groups with foundation grants and direct-mail fund-raising, and the multiplication of government agencies and congressional staffs.

Not only have the money costs of using political strategies fallen, the ideological costs have declined as well. Until rather recently, the chief issue in any congressional argument over new policies was whether it was legitimate for the federal government to do something at all. That was the crux of the dispute over Social Security, welfare, Medicare, civil rights, selective service, foreign aid, international alliances, price and wage controls, economic regulation, and countless other departures from the past. But once the initial law is passed, the issue of legitimacy disappears, and, except in those few cases where the Supreme Court later holds the law unconstitutional, does not reemerge.

Once the "legitimacy barrier" has fallen, political conflict takes a very different form. New programs need not await the advent of a crisis or an extraordinary majority, because no program is any longer "new"—it is seen, rather, as an extension, a modification, or an enlargement of something the government is already doing. Congressmen will argue about "how much," or "where," or "what kind," but not about "whether." One consequence is that the workload of Congress will grow astronomically.

Since there is virtually nothing the government has not tried to do, there is little it cannot be asked to do. Congressmen try frantically to keep

* *The American Political System* (American Enterprise Institute, 1978), p. 393.

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up with this growing workload by adding to their staffs, but of course a bigger staff does not produce less work, it produces more, and so the ideas, demands, and commitments presented daily to a legislator grow even faster. Moreover, Congress creates a bureaucracy of its own to keep up with the information-gathering and policy-generating capacities of the executive branch, leading to what Senator Daniel P. Moynihan has characterized as the "Iron Law of Emulation."*

This dramatic expansion of the political agenda has helped alter the distribution of political power. At one time, the legislative process was biased in favor of the opponents of any new policy. The committee system and the great powers of committee chairmen meant that the crucial calculation to be made by a proponent of a new policy was not how many congressmen were in favor of it, but which congressmen were opposed to it. The fact that the proposed policy was new and that there were few or no precedents for governmental action in that area made it easier for a Wilbur Mills, a James Eastland, or a Howard Smith to use their position on the House Ways and Means Committee, the Senate Judiciary Committee, or the House Rules Committee to block consideration of the proposal. But when the government is already doing something in the area, then there is an existing agency of government, and its associated private supporters with a stake in the matter, and at the very least the appropriations bill for that agency, and usually the legislative amendments proposed by that agency, must be considered.

Political scientists have frequently described American policy-making as "incremental." Some have used the term admiringly, because the process it describes builds consensus; others have used it critically, because that process prevents radical change and misrepresents some interests. But whatever one thinks of the concept, it is increasingly hard to believe it generally descriptive. We have brought under new regulatory machinery whole sectors of our economy; changed in one sudden blow the legality of a mandatory retirement age; rewritten (in a manner almost no one understands) the basic law governing retirement systems; banned the use of whole categories of chemicals; given to Congress a legislative veto over important parts of our foreign policy once reserved entirely for the President; adopted a vast and expensive system for financing health care; put under public auspices a large part of the American rail system; created public financing of presidential campaigns; changed the meaning of "equality of opportunity" from "fair competition" to "the achievement of racial goals"; and come close to authorizing cash grants to parents of children attending parochial schools and private colleges. These may be good ideas or they may be bad ones, but it is hard to describe them—and dozens of others like them—as "marginal" or "incremental" changes in policy.

IV

THE second change has been the atomization of certain key political institutions, notably Congress and the political parties. Congress has, to a degree, been de-institutionalized and individualized: its leadership has become weaker, power within it has been dispersed, the autonomy and resourcess of its individual members have been enlarged. As a result, it is no longer helpful to think of Congress as consisting of blocs, each representing an interest group and each having a potential veto over measures affecting its vital interests. This might strike some readers as a gain—vested interests can no longer so easily say no to things they oppose. But such a view neglects the price that has been paid for this: if nobody can say no and make it stick, then neither can anybody say yes and make it stick. If there are no vetoes, neither are there any imprimaturs.

The individual member of Congress has gained enormously at the expense of committee chairmen, party leaders, and interest groups. He or she now has a large personal staff and a voice in the choice of the staff members of committees. (The congressional bureaucracy is probably the fastest-growing one in Washington, with no nonsense about civil service to inhibit it. The staff in 1976 was three times larger than it was in 1956.) The seniority system no longer governs the choice of committee chairmen to the exclusion of all other considerations; in 1975, House Democrats, by secret ballot, deposed three committee chairmen and elevated in their stead more junior members. Committees no longer regularly meet behind closed doors (whereas almost half of all House committee meetings were closed to the public in 1972, only 3 per cent were by 1975). Al Ullman cannot dominate the Ways and Means Committee the way Wilbur Mills once did, it is unlikely that Robert Byrd or his successors will have the power that Lyndon Johnson did when he was Senate majority leader, and though Tip O'Neill is a stronger Speaker than Carl Albert, he is a far cry from Sam Rayburn.

Some of the enhanced autonomy and status of individual, especially junior, members of Congress was won by back-bench revolts against leadership, but much of it was given to them by leaders attempting to build their own power by doing lasting favors for the rank-and-file. When Lyndon Johnson was Senate majority leader, his stature among freshmen Senators was high in part because he adopted a practice in the 1950's of giving to

*See his article, "Imperial Government," in the June 1978 COMMENTARY.

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each new Senator at least one major committee assignment rather than, as had once been the case, of making them wait patiently for the "Club" to admit them into the ranks of the deserving. Among the latter-day beneficiaries of this generosity were George McGovern and Walter Mondale. In 1970, with only six years' seniority, McGovern became chairman of a Select Committee on Hunger and Mondale, with only seven years of service, chairman of a Committee on School Segregation. The well-publicized hearings of these committees did not harm the political ambitions of their youthful chairmen. In decentralizing power in Congress in order to enhance (temporarily) the power of a given leader, the leader is acting much like the man who keeps his house warm in the winter by burning in his fireplace the furniture, the doors, and the walls. Soon there is nothing left to burn.

It is not just the formal apparatus of party and leadership in Congress that is weaker, but the informal and social organization as well. Not long after Fischer wrote, William White described the Senate "Club" of veteran, chiefly Southern, Senators who dominated its affairs and acted, not surprisingly, entirely in the spirit of Calhoun and the concurrent majority. Within a decade after White wrote, the "Club" was pretty much finished, the victim of deaths, retirements, defeats, and—above all—political change. In 1949, in the Congress elected when Fischer was writing, Southerners held twice as many committee chairmanships as did Northerners and Westerners combined. By 1977, the Southern committee chairman was the exception, not the rule. In the period 1947-56, Gary Orfield notes, half of *all* the Democrats in Congress were from the South; today, less than one-third are.

Individual members of Congress are far more secure in their seats than once was the case, and with increased security goes increased freedom from those organizations, be they political parties or interest groups, that once controlled the resources necessary for reelection. Between 1952 and 1974, only about 6 per cent of the incumbent representatives seeking reelection were defeated, a substantial decline from earlier in this century. Moreover, of those running for reelection, fewer face close contests. When Fischer wrote in 1948, the winner of most House contests received 55 per cent of the vote or less. By 1972, most winners received 60 per cent of the vote or more. As political scientists like David Mayhew have pointed out, safe seats have become the rule, not the exception. Barring major electoral turnovers, such as in 1964, it may be that most new entrants to Congress will come from those districts where incumbents have decided voluntarily to retire.

Campaign-finance laws will strengthen this pattern. By restricting individual donations to $1,000, they limit sharply the chances of unknown and unwealthy candidates amassing large war chests to challenge well-known incumbents. By restricting donations from special-interest groups to $5,000, they limit the extent to which money can be the basis of group influence over legislators. (Rich candidates can still finance their own campaigns without restriction.) And if public financing of congressional campaigns should become law, one can be confident Congress will see to it that this "reform," like all others it has enacted, serves the advantage of incumbents.

The individualization and decentralization of Congress that has been the result of these changes in its internal affairs has been further augmented by the general decline of the political party, the increased use of radio and television for building personal followings in election campaigns, and the emergence of campaign organizations, often designed and staffed by professional campaign consultants, that are the personal property of the candidate rather than the collective effort of the party.

One consequence of these changes can be seen most dramatically in the Senate. From 1900 to 1956, only 30 per cent of the major-party candidates for President or Vice President came from the United States Senate; between 1960 and 1976, 70 per cent were Senators. The Senate has become the incubator of Presidents. When parties cannot pick presidential candidates but instead meet in conventions to ratify the choices made in two dozen or more primary elections and hundreds of local community caucuses, they discover they are often choosing among Senators because of the enormous advantage these persons have in developing a national reputation. The Senate is covered by the national press in a way the House is not; skillful and ambitious Senators can preside over dramatic hearings (into auto safety, the drug industry, malnutrition, organized crime, or intelligence-gathering) that are televised. Senators have the resources (a Senator from New York, for example, has a staff budget of around $1 million a year) to develop issues and reach national constituencies with which they wish to be identified. Computers can be programmed to produce huge and precisely indexed national mailing lists useful for reaching both voters and contributors.

When Fischer wrote, presidential candidates were still picked by conventions in which party "bosses" were influential. In 1948 there were presidential primaries in only fourteen states, and in five of these unpledged delegations ran at large. The open party caucus was almost unheard of. Though the Democratic party was deeply split among its ideological factions, the extremists of the Left and the Right did not contest the primaries but organized instead as independent parties. President Truman had only nominal opposition at the 1948 convention. In 1976, there were

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primaries in over two dozen states, wide open local caucuses in many others, and President Ford faced serious opposition in both the primaries and the convention. In each party, the ideological divisions were obvious and wide. Party regularity was an important consideration in 1948 for convention delegate and presidential candidate alike; anybody who used such a term in 1976 would have elicited either a smile or a yawn. When compromises were made in 1948, they were made to attract the middle-of-the-road voter; when they were made in 1976, it was to appease the more militant party activists (Walter Mondale was put on the Carter ticket to soothe the liberals, Robert Dole put on the Ford ticket to help please the conservatives). That Carter, a governor with no clear record on national issues, was able to win the Democratic nomination, was right in keeping with the political style of 1948; in 1976, however, it was seen as a curiosity to be explained by the temporary triumph of image over ideology in the wake of Watergate.

All these factors have tended to make the Congress of today, in comparison with that about which Fischer wrote in 1948, a collection of individuals rather than blocs. More precisely, blocs exist, but they are typically formed by the Congressmen themselves, on the basis of personal political convictions or broad allegiances to regions or sectors of society, rather than in response to, or as an instrument of, an organized interest outside Congress. Perhaps the largest and most significant bloc today is the Democratic Study Group, an organization of liberal Democrats in the House. It has leaders, a staff, a budget, regular meetings; its influence is hard to measure, but far from trivial. There is also a Black Caucus and a Northeast-Midwest Economic Advancement Coalition. In 1948, Congressmen were more likely to organize into a "farm bloc," or a "labor bloc," or an "oil bloc." Such influences still operate, of course, but groups based on ideology or racial or ethnic identification have become more important than those based on economic interest. And Congressmen change their minds more frequently, making it harder to count in advance on their position.

More assertive and individualistic members combined with fewer sources of influence mean that more effort must be devoted to rounding up votes. In the House, Representative John Brademas, the Democratic whip, is assisted by no fewer than 35 deputy or assistant whips and spends on this vote-producing operation over $400,000 a year, more than three times as much as was spent in 1970. One assistant whip with long experience recently complained that his job is "a hell of a lot more difficult than it used to be."

The individualization of politics has meant that interest groups have had to individualize their appeal and link it directly to the electoral fortunes of individual Congressmen. Thus, the rise of "grass-roots" lobbying—the careful, often computerized mobilization of letters, mailgrams, delegations, and financial contributions from individual citizens in each legislator's district or state. When the AFL-CIO was locked in struggle with the business-oriented National Action Committee on Labor Law Reform, the two sides were estimated to have generated nearly five million pieces of mail to Congress. Mark Green, director of Ralph Nader's Congress Watch, said that grass-roots lobbying has made Washington "an absolutely different city these days." Today, he noted, "you lose bills in the districts, not in Washington."

V

But if key political institutions are becoming so atomized, how does any policy get passed? The explanation, I suspect, is to be found in the third change in politics—the enhanced importance of ideas and of ideology. To return to Anthony King's metaphor, what makes the difference between the sluggish and the rushing crowd is the force of a compelling idea.

The Congress of 1968 or 1978, much more than that of 1948, is susceptible to the power of ideas whenever there seems to be a strong consensus as to what the correct ideas are. Such a consensus existed in the mid-1960's about the Great Society legislation; no such consensus about these matters exists today. This helps explain, as Henry J. Aaron has noted, the changing prospects of social-welfare policies. Consumerism, ecology, campaign-finance reform, and congressional ethics are other examples of ideas with strong symbolic appeal that, so long as the consensus endures, are handled by a political process in which the advantage lies with the proponents of change.

When a consensus evaporates or a symbol loses its power, issues are handled by a process which, like that in 1948, gives the advantage to the opponents of change. But sooner or later, a scandal, a shift in the focus of media attention, or the efforts of a skilled policy entrepreneur such as Ralph Nader or John Gardner will bring a compelling new idea to the top of the political agenda, and once again action will become imperative.

I do not wish to enter the argument whether there has been an "end of ideology" in the West or whether there is a heightened degree of "ideological constraint" in the public at large. Within Congress, however, the Republican party seems to have become more consistently conservative and the Democratic party more consistently liberal. Whatever has happened in society, the principle of affiliation among legislators has become, I think, more clearly based on shared ideas, and to a degree those shared ideas conform to party labels. (More accurately, the notion of party in Congress has been infused with more ideological meaning by its members.)

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The point is debatable and easily overstated, but one illustration suggests what may have happened. In 1949, the House voted on a bill to deregulate natural gas. The influence of party was scarcely detectable and, had we the data, the influence of ideology only slightly more so. The Democrats split almost evenly (49 per cent in favor, 51 per cent opposed); the Republicans were a bit more lopsided (73 per cent in favor, 27 per cent opposed). In 1977, the House voted again on a comparable though not identical bill. Now, the influence of party was almost complete: 75 per cent of the Democrats opposed it; 88 per cent of the Republicans favored it. Pietro Novola at the University of Vermont has found that ideology and partisanship were vastly more important than economic interest (whether one comes from a gas-consuming or gas-producing district) in explaining the 1977 congressional vote.

Much attention has rightly been paid to one source of politically influential ideas—the "New Class" composed of persons having high levels of education and professional occupations. This group is decidedly more liberal than other groups in society, so much so that Everett Ladd was able to conclude that by the early 1960's, a majority of the "privileged" elements in society considered themselves Democrats and voted for Democratic candidates for Congress. The New Class is responsive to, and provides support for, politicians who favor abortion on demand, environmental- and consumer-protection laws, and equal rights for women.

But every class has its counterpart class. The discussion of the New Class, and even its label, leads attention away from what is happening to other, non-liberal groups in society. Upper-middle-class white Northern Protestants, once the bastion of traditional conservatism, have not been converted into a liberal New Class, they have been split into two deeply opposed groups. Sidney Verba and his co-workers found that in the 1950's, this group was the most conservative identifiable segment of American opinion. By the 1970's, however, a profound change had occurred—one part of this group had become even more conservative, while another part had become very liberal. High-status Wasps are now the most polarized class in America, and to the extent that this class contributes disproportionately to political elites, these elites have become more polarized.

These divisions of opinion contribute powerfully to the kind of "one-issue" politics so characteristic of the present era. Pro-abortion versus pro-life; gun control versus the right to bear arms; gay rights versus traditional values; ERA versus anti-ERA; nuclear energy versus solar energy; proponents of affirmative action versus opponents of reverse discrimination—all these causes and more make life miserable for the traditional, coalition-seeking politician. Weakened institutions, individualized politics, and the rise of an educated, idea-oriented public combine to make it highly advantageous for political entrepreneurs to identify and mobilize single-issue constituencies and to enlist them, not only into electoral and legislative politics, but into court suits, referendum campaigns, and even calls for constitutional conventions.

The importance of single-issue politics is, of course, much discussed, but not without a touch of hypocrisy. Most columnists and commentators began to criticize this phenomenon only when it took directions of which they did not approve. Anti-war politics, the drive for abortion on demand, the effort to obtain gun control, and the opposition to nuclear energy are typically described by liberals as "movements" or "concerns." When the right-to-life forces or those opposing gun control get organized, however, their critics not only disapprove of their ideas, they deplore their use of "extremist" tactics.

To the extent that ideas determine whether the atomized political system will move speedily, sluggishly, or not at all, the principal task of political analysis becomes that of understanding the processes whereby certain ideas become dominant. This requires more subtle techniques for studying public opinion than any that have been routinely employed, techniques that will measure the intensity of feeling as well as its distribution and will distinguish opinions capable of providing the basis for political mobilization from those that are mere expressions of preference. And we require better knowledge about the organizations that shape opinion—the mass and elite media, the universities, and those acrónymic groups that manage to devise and implant compelling slogans.

In John Fischer's day, scholars studied big business, labor unions, medical societies, and farm groups. Today, we need to understand better how elites learn ideas in their colleges and law schools and from the magazines of opinion. How else can we explain, for example, why a generation of legislators who believed in the virtues of business regulation by independent commissions is being replaced by one seeking to deregulate many of those businesses, often over the bitter objections of the regulated industry? Or why a generation that applauded John F. Kennedy's inaugural promise to defend liberty anywhere, at any price, has become one that prefers to minimize risks of every kind, in every place?

VI

We are at a loss for a word or phrase to describe the new features of the political system; scholars even disagree as to whether it is all that new. Such terms as "veto-group politics" seemed most appropriate for the system that Fischer and later David Riesman de-

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scribed thirty years ago; that powerful insight allowed many discrete facts to be summarized in one economical statement. Today, the system is more confused and so our political vocabulary has become more prolix and less precise.

Viewed in a longer historical perspective, what we are seeing may not be all that new. The Congress in which Madison and his immediate successors sat was highly individualized. Strong, institutionalized congressional leadership did not emerge until the latter half of the 19th century; one contest for Speaker in 1856 ran to 133 ballots. Factions abounded, but national interest-group organization did not occur until the end of the 19th century. "Single-issue" politics existed, the abolition of slavery being the most conspicuous example. But in Madison's time, and for many decades thereafter, national politics was less a career than a hobby; the federal government played a minor role in human affairs; the range of issues with which Congress had to deal was small; and ideological cleavages tended to occur one at a time. Now, governing is a profession, the government plays a large role, and issues tend to pile up, one atop the other, in a network of multiple and profound ideological cleavages. Whether one describes as "fundamental" the changes in institutions and ideas that have accompanied the rise of modern government is in part a matter of style. Yet one must be impressed by the change in the dominant ethos of the times—whereas the period 1890-1920 was the great era of institution-building in voluntary associations, political parties, corporate enterprises, and congressional leadership, the last decade or so has been one that has criticized, attacked, and partially dismantled institutions.

From a broader, international perspective, one might say that the changes I have described add up to nothing of fundamental importance. The American constitutional order, with its separate executive and legislative branches and its independent judiciary, remains very different from the British system of cabinet-in-parliament. And so it does. (It is ironic to note the stirrings among British politicians who would like to see their system, which stifles the backbench member of Commons, changed into something more "American." They may suppose that they can combine the advantages of strong party government with the advantages of powerful legislative committees and more autonomous legislators, but I suspect they are wrong.)

By the standards of liberals and socialists, the American system remains far more conservative than that of European democracies. Where is our national health insurance, our comprehensive income-maintenance scheme, our government ownership of key industries? By these tests, the American system *is* conservative. But by another test it is far more activist and innovative than almost any European democracy: what other country has anything like our detailed federal regulation of business enterprise, our elaborate set of "tax expenditures," our affirmative-action programs addressed to the demands of a growing list of ethnic and racial minorities? Some rather careful distinctions must be made before one can compare how American policy-making differs from that abroad.

WHAT is more striking to me is that, since the 1930's, there has occurred in this country an extraordinary redistribution of political power without any prior redistribution of income or wealth. Those persons, of the Right as well as the Left, who are enchanted with economic explanations of political life have their work cut out for them if they insist on ignoring the powerful transformation in *ideas* that seems to lie at the heart of these changes.

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The Trouble with Latin America

Jean-François Revel

LATIN AMERICA is generally included among the "developing" regions of the world. The term is an awkward one because, first of all, it suggests that a country's or a region's problems are primarily economic in nature, and second, it fails to distinguish among countries and even entire continents with enormous differences in their standards of living and their economic systems. Not that the all-embracing nature of such concepts as the "Third World" or "underdevelopment" has gone completely uncriticized. The Third World is now usually subdivided into zones and categories, so that at least Upper Volta and Brazil do not carry the same tags. Lately, too, we have witnessed the creation of a special category of super-rich "underdeveloped" nations—the oil-exporting countries. And the purely economic definition of underdevelopment has also come under criticism. Gunnar Myrdal, in particular, in his monumental *Asian Drama: An Inquiry into the Poverty of the World,* has analyzed certain non-economic causes of underdevelopment—rooted in the cultures of elites and masses alike—and denounced the taboos that have led experts, especially the ones working for international organizations, to ignore such factors. Today, the myths of the Third World are beginning to undergo criticism at the hands of some of the very people who created and spread them.

Every traveler and every reasonably careful reader of the literature on the subject knows very well that it is impossible to explain in identical terms the phenomenon of underdevelopment in Africa, in Asia, and in Latin America. And the same holds for development, too. The past several years have witnessed the takeoff of South Korea, Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore, and, to a lesser degree, Thailand and Indonesia; some of these countries are becoming redoubtable competitors of the old industrial nations. Moreover, this economic and technological takeoff has been accomplished in spite of the dictatorial or authoritarian form of the political regimes in these countries, and in spite of the double "imperialism" of Japan and the United States. On the other hand, similar results have not been obtained under the dictatorial regime of mainland China, whose economic and technological stagnation and even regression and low standard of living have been noted by Mao's successors, contradicting the earlier golden propaganda which sympathizers all over the world accepted and repeated blindly.

The issue of economic underdevelopment in Communist countries is pertinent in this context because Latin America contains a Communist society: Cuba. Of course, information on Cuba is as difficult to obtain as for any other Communist country, but it is not altogether impossible. The obstacles have been mental—interiorized censorship, whether willful or unconscious, which for fifteen years provided Castro with the sort of immunity from analysis and criticism that Stalin had benefited from previously. Despite the accumulation of lies, though, it is not impossible to gauge Cuba's situation, both economic and political, in comparison with that of other Latin American countries.

Economic underdevelopment in a given place can have many causes: a basic lack of natural resources; climatic or demographic handicaps; the unwillingness of a culture to acquire production techniques; colonial exploitation; the disasters provoked by certain agrarian reforms that destroy the traditional agricultural fabric while slowing productivity; linguistic and tribal divisions; an inability to organize the necessary administrative infrastructure or, on the contrary, a proliferation of bureaucracies; and so forth. Examining the regions currently classified as underdeveloped, one notes that each case suggests a different explanation, and, moreover, that the presence of one or more of the enumerated ills has not inhibited many countries around the world from developing quite nicely. This proves that no single identified cause of underdevelopment is, of itself, responsible. And even taken together, the various factors have their antidotes. I would almost say that underdevelopment is a natural phenomenon, and

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that the problem of development consists in discovering the antidote.

WHAT about Latin America? In Latin America, underdevelopment is not due, principally, to insurmountable economic obstacles, or to overbearing population pressures, or to any pronounced cultural gap. I would say rather that Latin American backwardness has causes that are essentially political.

I expect to hear right away: "But of course! Agreed! The cause is imperialism!" Well, no. I am speaking of perfectly indigenous, internal political causes: the permanent self-destruction of Latin American societies which has *allowed* "imperialism" to have its corrosive effect on societies that are already decadent.

Let us examine the possible causes of Latin America's present-day underdevelopment. The old Spanish or Portuguese colonialism can no longer be seriously adduced as a cause. Colonial ties with Europe were severed at the beginning of the 19th century (in Cuba, at the end of the century). If such antique colonial status were still influential, the United States ought to be underdeveloped today, not to speak of Australia, South Africa, and Canada.

A second cause might be scarcity of natural resources, aggravated by demographic and climatic handicaps. This hypothesis does not stand up to scrutiny, either. From the Rio Grande to Tierra del Fuego, Latin America knows every climate. Taken as a whole, it is not overpopulated, which is not to say there is a shortage of manpower. As for natural resources, in agriculture and forestry as well as in mineral and energy sources, Latin America is vastly superior to Western Europe.

A third cause—the one unanimously agreed upon by the Latin Americans themselves—is supposed to be imperialism, the continuation of colonialism. In other words, the wealth of the rich nations is said to be due to the "plundering" of the Third World, first by colonialism pure and simple, then by neo-imperialism. To counter the first part of this charge, one need only note that the two European powers with the oldest, largest, and in many ways the richest colonial empires, and those which held on to their empires the longest, happen to be the two countries of Western Europe which did *not* participate, or participated only half-heartedly and belatedly, in the industrial takeoff: Spain and Portugal. By contrast, Germany, with no significant colonial empire, had become, by the end of the 19th century, the industrial engine of Europe, surpassing even Great Britain and definitely surpassing France which, in spite of its immense colonial empire (or because of it?), remained, until 1940, relatively stagnant from an industrial point of view and largely attached to a traditional peasant economy. France's decisive industrial growth took place after the loss of its colonies; the standard of living in France rose as much between 1950 and 1970 as it had risen during the hundred and fifty preceding years.

On the other hand, for a long time the economic level and potential strength of certain Latin American countries had nothing to fear from a comparison with the Old World or even with North America. At the end of the 19th century, Argentina had a per-capita income comparable to Germany's; on the eve of World War II, it was equal to Great Britain's. (This does not mean that social justice prevailed there, but neither did it prevail in Great Britain. Development and inequality are two distinct problems.) In 1945, Argentina emerged as a world leader in food exports; its GNP was equal to half of all Latin America's. The large Italian emigration to Argentina, lasting seventy-five years, proves that for the poor of Europe's underdeveloped regions, this country was as attractive as the United States. Therefore, one can say that today's Argentina, with its record of economic failure and political disintegration, *became* an underdeveloped country. And even then it is only *relatively* underdeveloped, and only by comparison with its past, and with North America.

INDEED, one must never forget how heterogeneous Latin America is. In 1970, Chile was a prosperous country compared with Bolivia. Between a Peruvian and a Venezuelan or even a poor Mexican, there is a greater average income disparity than between the latter two and a Spaniard in the lowest income bracket. Furthermore, one must single out those countries where a high proportion of Indians have presented, and continue to present, the classic problem of traditional mentalities and techniques confronted with modern economic and political forms. In Argentina this problem has not presented itself, any more than it has in Uruguay, two countries that have nevertheless regressed in a particularly spectacular fashion on both the economic and the cultural level.

In fact, even in those countries with large Indian populations, it is the people of European or predominantly European extraction who make up the leading class, leaving their mark on politics, the economy, the military, culture, and manners. This is also the case in countries such as Cuba, where part of the population is of African extraction. (An exception is the former British Guyana, a Communist-inclined dictatorship in which the Africans dominate the Indians.) Latin America is thus not an ex-colony like India, Algeria, or Angola but is rather like North America, a region shaped by colonists who have become independent of their home countries, not by natives who have expelled the colonists. Like the U.S., it is a projection of Europe. But of the

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"other" Europe: not the "good" Europe of democracy, human rights, and social cohesiveness, but the "bad" Europe of coups d'état and civil wars, of military adventurers and demagogic chieftains, of corruption and injustice, of pseudo-revolutions and bloody repression.

This is why it seems to me that the comparative underdevelopment of Latin America comes not from economic problems but from an inability to govern. After the phony Bolivian elections and the coup d'état of July 1978, General Pereda declared, "Bolivia's problems stem from its underdevelopment." I should say exactly the opposite, and not only with reference to Bolivia: the underdevelopment of Latin America stems from its problems, from its *problem,* which is essentially a problem of the self-poisoning of the political culture. What is more, self-poisoning here is synonymous with self-satisfaction. The Latin American elites have carried to an extreme a defect that is fatal to a society no less than to an individual: namely, the notion that everything bad that happens is never the fault of oneself, but always the fault of others.

From this stems the use and abuse of "imperialism." There exist two imperialisms: the real thing and the fantasy. The latter reinforces the former. For the fantasy that consists in blaming one's own mistakes on foreign imperialism prevents one from correcting those mistakes, enfeebling one and thereby leaving one more vulnerable to the real imperialism. One hundred years ago, Sweden was a much poorer country than most of the countries of Latin America; its population was equal to half the small population of contemporary Bolivia. Would Sweden have become one of the ten strongest economic powers in the world and the second or third (after the U.S. and Switzerland) in per-capita income if it had spent a century merely condemning the "imperialism" of the powers that were crushing it: Great Britain, Germany, and Russia?

One need not deny the existence of imperialism, especially as this is a universal historical phenomenon, known long before capitalism and perhaps even more substantial, nowadays, in the Communist bloc than in the capitalist one. But it is pathological to use the same abstract term to describe the occupation of one country by a foreign army and the establishment in another of a powdered milk factory, simply because the latter happens to be built, in part or in whole, with the help of foreign investments. When I lived in Mexico in the early 1950's, the major supplier of telephone equipment was the Swedish company, Eriksson. Was that a case of "Swedish imperialism"? Was Sweden preventing Mexico from building its own telephones? Were Mexican entrepreneurs unable to enter the international market? Was Mexico unable to create competent technicians? The answer to all these questions is no. But the wealthy class in Mexico preferred to invest in real estate and land speculation rather than in industry; the young Mexican bourgeois preferred to study law, which allowed them to become *"licenciados"* and *"politicos,"* rather than science and technology (the opposite occurred in Japan, with well-known results); the politicians and the bureaucrats preferred to blackmail foreign companies by demanding percentages or envelopes at every step of their operations, rather than undertaking such operations themselves; and the most "anti-imperialist" Mexican President, Luis Echeverria (1970-76), was not in the least reluctant to enrich himself through corruption.

What is responsible for this mixture of *caudillismo* and corruption? The Eriksson company? The CIA? Is it not rather in a solid Latin American tradition? The countries of the Third World cannot demand economic aid, credit, investments, technological transfers, and complain about imperialism when they obtain them, and then again when they are withdrawn! What is known as economic imperialism has never been anything but economic activity itself, the distribution of capital, goods, and innovations. Contributions from abroad can be factors of strength or of weakness, depending on how they are used in the place in question. Multinationals, like alcohol, are neutral; it is not wine which is responsible for alcoholism, but the drunkard. In one country a multinational will build a factory to produce goods, in another it will buy politicians to sell them; it depends on the country, not on the multinational, which has no preconceptions. Nor will assassinating five Fiat executives in four years, as happened in Argentina, reduce economic dependence. On the contrary, terrorism is as underdeveloped as it is underdeveloping. Proof? The current human and capital impoverishment of one of the most industrialized regions of Spain and Europe: the Basque country.

In his illuminating commentaries on the recent tragedies of Latin America, François Bourricaud has demonstrated the emptiness of the concept of "dependence," which nevertheless seems to be the sole explanatory factor haunting the Latin American mind. In fact, dependence always has a double meaning, and a double face. Without Middle Eastern oil and Chilean copper, the industrialized countries would not have become rich; but were it not for their industrial development, the reserves of the producing countries would be worth nothing.

Moreover, as became apparent in the wake of the oil boycott and crisis of 1973, Europe and Japan are incomparably more "dependent" on foreign supplies of energy and raw materials than is Latin America. In fact, Latin America is in a less disadvantageous position than Japan: it can train electricians, whereas Japan cannot create

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petroleum in its subsoil. In the 1960's, Mexico maintained a growth rate comparable to Japan's (6½ per cent per annum as late as 1969); if its economy has subsequently fallen apart, it is not because of the energy crisis, since, already an oil producer, Mexico has found new and abundant underground reserves during the 1970's. And Mexico's oil is not being "robbed" by foreign countries; it has been nationalized since 1937. Yet in human and social terms Mexico is still underdeveloped.

Similarly, Peru's recent shipwreck and tragic famine are due principally to the unforgivable and prolonged errors made by the "progressive" soldiers who seized power in 1968. And in Chile, according to the French socialist Alain Touraine, "one cannot separate the coup d'état [by Pinochet] from the crisis within the popular-unity movement of Allende and its inability to sustain a coherent economic policy."

THIS sort of diagnosis is never heard in Latin America. Except for Carlos Rangel's great book, *Del buen salvaje al buen revolucionario* (published in English under the title, *The Latin Americans,* 1977), which treats Latin American history as the history of a failure, and a failure with human causes, Latin American civilization may be the first ever to avoid self-criticism entirely. Octavio Paz, the Mexican poet, said upon returning to his country in 1971, "I am returning because I heard the word self-criticism. . . ." He may have heard the word, but I doubt he saw the thing. Only recently his compatriot, the philosopher Leopoldo Zea, professor of the Colegio de Mexico, published in the Spanish daily *El Pais* an article called "Latin America, Another Side of Imperialism." In this stereotyped piece, Zea explains that (1) formerly, the protection of dictatorships in South America was evidence of Yankee imperialism; (2) today, the struggle of Washington against these same dictatorships is evidence of Yankee neo-imperialism. Naturally, Zea neglects to mention that a large number of today's dictatorships were born as reactions to Castroite and Guevarist terrorism, and he scornfully dismisses any reformist solutions or that relative degree of respect for human rights which might assure a bit of happiness and prosperity for the masses, as is the case in Venezuela.

It is not that Latin Americans are not inclined to be self-deprecating. But self-deprecation is not self-criticism. The former comes from hating oneself, the latter from self-respect; the former leads only to inertia, the latter to progress and improvement.

In practical terms it is impossible that all the evils facing a collectivity of 19 countries, with 320 million people, in an area of 12½ million square miles, with land and mineral resources among the richest on earth, should be always and only the fault of others. So long as this insanity prevails, Latin America will remain underdeveloped, sick with the underdevelopment which is at once the most curable and the most incurable: the underdevelopment of political intelligence.

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"Necessary Murder": Spender & Auden in the 30's

Bernard McCabe

Today the deliberate increase in the chances of death
The conscious acceptance of guilt in the necessary murder.

W. H. Auden wrote that in 1937, in his poem "Spain." A year or two earlier, Cecil Day Lewis, a friend and fellow poet, had written:

It is now or never the hour of the knife,
The break with the past, the major operation.

And in 1938, the poet Stephen Spender's political play, *The Trial of a Judge*, ended like this:

Kill! Kill! Kill! Kill!

With a background chorus of

We shall be free
We shall find peace.

Spender's new book, *The Thirties and After: Poetry, Politics, People, 1930's–1970's*,* a collection of literary and political odds-and-ends that includes several pieces from the mid-30's, revives the question: what was it that made these young men, the leading poets of their generation in England, write in this ferocious way? (They were not *all* that young, by the way; Auden was thirty when he wrote "Spain," Day Lewis twenty-seven when he wrote the lines just quoted, and Spender was twenty-nine when he wrote *The Trial of a Judge*.) Consider their background: the calmly civilized British pre-war upper-middle-class world, still untouched by panic and emptiness. Auden was the son of a doctor, Day Lewis's father was an Anglican clergyman, and Spender's a high government official. All went to respectable public schools, and all inherited in one way or another the British liberal-democratic tradition. Yet their poetry in the 30's celebrates the Necessary Murder, the Knife, Killing; it is a poetry of extreme violence.

They were also all adherents, in one way or another, of the Communist party of Great Britain. Day Lewis was a member throughout the mid-30's; Spender, though only officially a party member for a few weeks, was an ardent self-proclaimed fellow-traveler. Auden, as always a more complex case, hovered on the edges—"a paddler's willingness to splash about on the shores of the revolutionary ocean," says David Caute.† Orwell, in his usual acerbic way, dismissed Auden as a "parlor-bolshevik," yet there has been some recent revision of that view; George Watson claims unequivocally that "Auden was an active Marxist revolutionary through most of the 30's . . . many of his writings then, both in verse and prose, are manifestoes in a political cause." The recently published *English Auden*, a compilation of everything he wrote in the 30's, reveals that Watson is not far from the truth. Auden, like Spender and Day Lewis, was frequently active in a revolutionary cause.

These poets, and many other intellectuals from the same world, spoke freely of violence, made art out of violence, and aligned themselves with what was, at that time at least, the most uncompromisingly and organizedly violent of political parties, the party that believed with Marx that violence was the midwife of history. Their prose commended revolution, their poetry celebrated it.

Where did this enthusiasm come from? Spender and his friends, the Auden Generation, as Samuel Hynes has called them, all had Edwardian childhoods and grew up in bourgeois comfort, far from the world of the oppressed, in the years immediately before World War I. They were born just too late to participate in that catastrophe, but in good time to experience some of its traumas. The direct impact of the war on these writers cannot be overstressed. Its literary impact was everywhere

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†*The Fellow-Travelers* (1973). Several interesting books on the 30's have appeared in recent years. Julian Symons's brief and bright *The Thirties* (1960) has been followed by *Jonrney to the Frontier* by Peter Stansky and William Abrahams (1966); *Poets of the Thirties* by D.E.S. Maxwell (1969); *Children of the Sun* by Martin Green (1976); *The Auden Generation* by Samuel Hynes (1976). See also Stuart Samuels's essay, "English Intellectuals and Politics in the Thirties," in Philip Rieff's *On Intellectuals* (1969). Most recently there has been a lively contribution from George Watson in *Politics and Literature in Modern Britain* (1977), especially his chapter, "Did Stalin Dupe the Intellectuals?"

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around them in the 20's. It is useful, for instance, to read D. H. Lawrence with this in mind—not only *Kangaroo*, but the great short novels like *The Fox* and *The Captain's Doll*. And *Women in Love* can be read as a novel about England and the war. One imagines the impact of other works of the early 20's, the various bitter anatomies of a war-destroyed world like Huxley's *Antic Hay* and of course "The Waste Land." Then late in the 20's came the books by their immediate elders who had been in the war: Robert Graves, Siegfried Sassoon, Herbert Read, David Jones—books of horrified reminiscence and revulsion from the war's violence.

A favorite poet of Spender, Day Lewis, and Auden was Wilfred Owen, a handsome young man who had fought bravely through the years of the war only to die in its very last week. His poetry, written in the trenches, had begun with orthodox patriotic flourishes but ended in haunting, de-romanticized evocations of the terrible reality. His "Abram and Isaac" must have had powerful resonances for Spender and his group:

> Abram . . . stretched forth the knife to slay his son.
> When lo! an angel called him out of heaven,
> Saying, lay not thy hand upon the lad,
> Neither do anything to him. Behold,
> A ram, caught in the thicket, by its horns;
> Offer the Ram of Pride instead of him.
> But the old man would not do so, slew his son
> And half the seed of Europe, one by one.

THE 30's poets thought and wrote a lot about the war. Auden's puzzling play, *Paid on Both Sides* (1928), can most fruitfully be read in terms of war-hatred, war-fear, the sense of the meaninglessness of it all. Spender in 1931 was saying,

> Who live under the shadow of a war,
> What can I do that matters?

In the early 30's the anti-war, anti-violence movement was at its height. Pacifist groups flourished: the League of Nations Union, the Peace Pledge Union, the Anti-War Council, the Scientists' Anti-War Group, the New Peace Movement. Pacifism was mixed with a sense of betrayal: the fathers had spilled their sons' blood in an empty cause. So pacifism was bound up with a rejection of the immediate past and an accompanying search for a new order. Hence Auden's call for "new styles of architecture, a change of heart."

But by 1930, the poets were ready to strengthen the "politics of the heart" with Marx. In another arresting poem in 1932, Auden draws a picture of war-broken bourgeois civilization at its last gasp:

> Get there if you can and see the land you once were proud to own
> Though the roads have almost vanished and the expresses never run;
> Smokeless chimneys, damaged bridges, rotting wharves and choked canals,
> Tramlines buckled, smashed trucks lying on their side across the rails;
> Power-stations locked, deserted, since they drew the boiler fires;
> Pylons fallen or subsiding, trailing dead high-tension wires;
> Head-gears gaunt on grass-grown pit-banks, seams abandoned years ago;
> Drop a stone and listen for its splash in flooded dark below.

Readers who knew Tennyson's "Locksley Hall," an early Victorian hymn to progress, would catch the dead echo of that poem's jaunty rhythms and get the ironic point. "Power-stations locked, deserted"—England was in extreme economic depression. The worst off were miners and steelworkers in the stagnant heavy industries. One town in the north, Jarrow, with 80 per-cent unemployment, came to symbolize the general misery. From Jarrow in 1932 came the first hunger march, when poor, undernourished, often sick men marched through the heart of England to London to dramatize their plight. Little help resulted, and nothing seemed more clearly to underline the breakdown of parliamentary democracy. The Labor party's crisis-coalition with the Conservatives, and the new National Government's apparent indifference or impotence seemed a classic illustration of the hostile Marxist analysis of 20th-century social democracy.

Spender, Auden, and the novelist Christopher Isherwood had also spent considerable time in Germany, where they had seen the breakdown of that country's experiment in social democracy, the Weimar republic, and the spectacle, in 1932, of the Rhine-Ruhr industrialists financing the Nazi party. Having already rebelled against the conventional bastions of bourgeois culture—the school, the church, the family—they were ready to add Marx to a pantheon already housing Freud and Nietzsche, and to share in that powerful and concerted swing to the Left among British intellectuals that is the most striking feature of literary life in the England of the early 30's.

Marx and Lenin may not in fact have been read much, but everybody in 1932 read John Strachey's *The Coming Struggle for Power*, a book that analyzed England's past, present, and future in clear Marxist terms. Echoing Lenin's *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism*, Strachey in looking at the past could treat the last war in terms going beyond Wilfred Owen's Ram of Pride. It had been a war for markets between competing imperialists who had duped their workers into seeing it as an honorable national struggle. The present was a turmoil of capitalist self-contradiction, and the future offered a simple choice between fascism and Communism. Strachey's book gave the Spender world a rationale for its growing left-wing enthusiasm and gave a sense of direction to its growing

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anti-fascism. Many in that world became Communists, most declared themselves strong supporters of the party. By 1934 a British branch of Writers International had been firmly established, and in 1935 *Left Review*, an official Communist party political journal, was launched.

WHAT else turned them toward Communism? No doubt that sense of uncertainty and anxiety that pervades so much of their early work. It offered an escape from their past, and an urgency for the future, a sense of purpose. Stephen Spender in 1933 sought to communicate this sense of purpose:

Oh young men, oh young comrades
it is too late to stay in those houses
your fathers built where they built you to breed
money on money. . . .
Oh comrades step beautifully from the solid
wall
Advance, to rebuild. . . .

Communism offered the assurance, repeated in poem after poem, of being on the right side, and even more, the central Marxist idea of being on the side of history, which, Auden wrote, "May say Alas, but cannot help nor pardon."

Further, as is often pointed out, Communism fulfilled a quasi-religious need for community. It offered an escape from private guilt, especially the guilt of a privileged class (the young comrades Spender exhorts to step beautifully are all assumed to come from *rentier* homes), and, with its authority, an escape from private awareness, the loneliness of individualism. It is strange to read in André Gide's *Journal* for 1932, when he was going through *his* Communist phase: *"La personnalité ne s'affirme jamais plus qu'en se renonçant . . . seules peuvent s'inquieter du communisme les personnalités indecises"* ("Personality is never so strongly affirmed as in the act of self-renunciation . . . only indecisive souls are capable of becoming agitated by Communism"). Yet is does not ring all that differently from the comment that Auden's friend and collaborator, Louis MacNeice, made in his autobiography: "The strongest appeal of the Communist party was that it demanded sacrifice; you had to sink your ego."

Poets now needed to see their art as something more than art. "What shall the self-conscious man do to be saved?" asked Auden in 1934. He meant, what should the artist do to be saved? The clever young poet, John Cornford, sprung from a long line of Cambridge academic aristocracy, then in his second year at the university and already a Communist party member with considerable influence, wrote in a pamphlet:

> The whole field of British industry presents a picture of productive waste that capitalism cannot overcome. . . . Out of the breakdown of the standards of an entire class a compact revolutionary core is being formed.

Faced with such language, the poets were hard-pressed. (Cornford, as it happens, dismissed Spender's work as "poetry of revolution as a literary fashion, not as historic reality . . . an idealist, romantic affair.") In order to answer Auden's question, in order "to be saved," to feel part of the "revolutionary core," they had to write poems that would be acceptable as modes of political action. Spender published a critical study, *The Destructive Element* (1935), in which he urged a synthesis of Marxism and psychoanalysis on "the writer who wishes to write about society as a whole, and not about the individual severed from his background." Later he spoke of "wanting to relate the public passion to my private life." The public passion was politics, and the private life was his life as a lyric poet. Lyrics and politics did not easily mix. But politics became the subject of the poets' verses and the counter-claims of art and political action the subject of their critical debate.

Here is the kind of thing they wrote. Auden, in the jokey-serious manner he must have picked up in Germany:

Comrades who when the sirens roar
From office shop and factory pour
. . . . . .
We know, remember, what it is
That keeps you celebrating this
Sad ceremonial.

On you our interests are set
Your sorrow we shall not forget
While we consider
Those who in every county town
For centuries have done you brown,
But you shall see them tumble down
Both horse and rider.

Day Lewis attacks the British press lords:

Scavenger baron and your jackal vassals
Your pimping press-gang your unclean vessels
We'll make you swallow your words at a gulp,
And turn you back to your element, pulp.
Dont bluster, Bimbo, it wont do you any good;
We can be much ruder and we're learning to
shoot.

And Spender, more oracular as was his way, but just as violent in the end, contemplating the Marxist vision:

No one
Shall hunger; Man shall spend equally.
Our goal which we compel. Man shall be man.
That program of the antique Satan,
Bristling with guns on the indented page,
With battleships towering from hilly waves:
For what? Drive of a ruining purpose
Destroying all but its age long exploiters.
Our program like this, but opposite.
Death to the killers, bringing light to life.

Now that the distance of forty years has weakened the political and moral support that no doubt made them more easily acceptable to their

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contemporary audiences, poems of this kind sound either glib or uneasy. There is an evident gap between public position and private sensibility. Paradoxically, all these would-be political poets worked best in essentially non-popular modes. They liked arcane illusion, ellipses; they were full of high-speed references, private jokes, and the assurance of their class. In his new book, Spender remarks, justly enough: "If their poetry strikes one as addressed to anyone in particular, it is to sixth-formers from their old schools and to one another." A typical instance: Auden's long political poem "The Orators" conceals in its opening lines an imitation of his preparatory-school headmaster preaching a sermon, a fact hidden no doubt to all but the intimates; hidden to me too until I happened to read the same marvelously funny passage introduced casually by Isherwood in his autobiographical novel, *Lions and Shadows* (1937). This is a fact of no great importance, but symptomatic of the intense coterie side of these poets.

They all had difficulty in assuming the mantle of a Marxist bard. But: "You shall see them tumble"; "We're learning to shoot"; "Death to the killers"; and Auden's call for "the death of the old gang"—it is impossible to miss the real violence in these 1933 poems written by anti-war pacifists. Brooding anticipation of the next war no doubt helped to produce those obsessive images: guns, knives, executions, enemy frontiers to be crossed. But powerful pressures came also from the reverse side of their extreme reaction to the war of their childhood, namely, their own fascination with it. Isherwood, whose father, a regular army colonel, was killed early in the war, wrote in *Lions and Shadows* about how he and his peers imagined the war as a great test, a proving of manhood that his generation had just missed. They felt uneasy about it, and half-regretted that lost community of danger and of common simple aims: the attractive simplicity of violent solutions, of necessary murders. Party membership helped here. To be a Marxist struck a note of courageous challenge. Even E. M. Forster, everybody's ideal of woollen-waistcoated, two-cheers-for-democracy English peace-and-quiet, announced about this time that he would have been a Communist if he had been "a younger and braver man."

THE characteristic writing of this period and this generation can be found in the periodical *New Writing*, founded by John Lehmann in 1936. It announced itself as anti-fascist, and clearly had a strong Communist and fellow-traveling bias. Spender, Auden, and Day Lewis all appeared there regularly. Here is another fragment of lively Auden:

> It's farewell to the drawing-room's civilized cry,
> The professor's sensible whereto and why,
> The frock-coated diplomat's social aplomb,
> Now matters are settled with gas and with bomb.

Auden, as so often, maintained a saving lightness. Day Lewis was more heavy-handed as he reached for the same "popular" touch in a poem addressed to Death:

> When the time comes for a clearance,
> When light brims over the hill,
> Mister you can rely on us
> To execute your will.

One notes also the attempt at a tough man-to-man effect. And ending on a threatening note was a favored strategy ("We're learning to shoot").

New Writing went in for down-to-earth social realism in its prose, and tried hard, with only moderate success, to encourage proletarian documentary work of a kind familiar in the U.S. in the 30's—there was a long account of the Jarrow march by a participant, for instance. It published a lot of translated work from Germany, Italy, Spain, most of it by political refugees. There was some American writing, and fairly frequent Russian contributions appeared, often agit-prop work of startling woodenness, as in a notably dreadful story, "The Road To Affluence," by one P. Tchikvadze, depicting a peasant farmer, Ambako, delightedly welcoming collectivization:

> I want to work hard for the State and myself. What a lot of good is being done all around! You can kill Ambako if by the end of the second Five Year Plan a motor-car isn't bellowing in his yard.

Here also appeared Rex Warner's "Hymn":

> Light has been let in. The fences are down. No broker is left alive.
> Now you can join us, now altogether sing All Power
> To lovers of life, to workers, to the hammer, the sickle, the Blood.
> Come then companions, this is the spring of the Blood.
> Heart's heyday, movement of masses, beginning of good.

Awful stuff, of course.

BUT reconciling poetry and revolution was often difficult. Young Christopher Caudwell and the very young John Cornford (both of whom were killed fighting in Spain) both insisted to the end that a writer's only hope lay with Communism, total identification with the workers, and total support for the USSR. Spender and his friends, however, were less at ease with this absolutism, and clung to "bourgeois" ideas of individual freedom. It is instructive to watch Day Lewis and Spender struggling in their various 30's tracts with the dilemma of the individual artist confronted by the dictatorship of the proletariat. It was all very difficult for them. And yet—to return to the central point—how easily they accepted and used the language of extremism and violence. And, as we shall see, how easily they accepted the

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practice of violence. They reacted honorably enough to the news coming out of Germany and Italy, but they closed their minds to the news coming from the USSR.

An explanation is usually made in terms of a necessary loyalty to the demands of the anti-fascist struggle. Russia was *the* effective enemy of fascism, *the* socialist country, where revolution was really working, where the Five Year Plans substituted progress for capitalist decadence, where, in the place of bourgeois freedom for one class only, all men, including artists, were free to create the future. Any attack on the USSR would be a victory for fascism, and so on. The truth-versus-expediency dilemma is common enough in political life, but it is especially acute when the disciplines of revolutionary politics are at work (Sartre and Camus had a famous encounter on this issue in the 50's). In the 30's, whether one was a party member like Day Lewis or a fellow-traveler like Spender and Auden, a commitment to the Left meant strong pressure for accepting all of Communism's tactics. Anti-fascist attachments of this kind led Kingsley Martin, the editor of the *New Statesman,* to turn down Orwell's 1937 revelations about Stalinist suppression of the anarchist POUM group in Spain on the grounds that they "controverted the political policy of the paper." Commitment demanded the necessary falsehood.

All these British intellectuals cultivated some version of the fellow-traveler mentality. With it, as David Caute has pointed out, came the notion not only of a geographical but of an intellectual and emotional distance from the revolution, "a matter of having your revolution vicariously." No doubt this state of mind encouraged the ease with which they came to accept and talk with enthusiasm about the great Red Terror of earlier days, in 1918-21. It is harder to comprehend the ease with which they accepted the violence of the 30's.

Orwell's comment on Auden's "necessary murder" was that the poem had been written by "a person to whom murder was only a word," and *à propos* produced a celebrated epigram: "so much left-wing thought is a kind of playing with fire by people who don't even know that fire is hot." Yet it seems to me that Spender and Day Lewis and especially Auden were not fools, knew perfectly well what fire was, and were perfectly serious about "preparing the way for the new Lenin," as their anthologist Michael Roberts put it in *New Country* (1933). Nothing is to be gained from not taking them and their politics seriously. It is a temptation British critics tend to fall into—Julian Symons, Robin Skelton in his useful Penguin anthology *Poetry of the Thirties,* and, despite the astuteness of his social analysis, Martin Green in *Children of the Sun.* All, for their various reasons, seem most attached to an ironic treatment of their subjects' political life, on the lines of Cyril Connolly's brilliant 1937 satire, "Where Engels Fears To Tread," a campy-comic view of it all as nothing more than the latest literary game. Watson (whose book I quoted earlier) insists on the other hand that Auden, like Spender and Day Lewis, saw violence as a serious guarantee of sincerity. But it is difficult at this distance to understand, let alone sympathize with, the way this world of cultured humanists—fascist threat or no fascist threat—could let the successive Stalinist purges go by, the killings after Kirov's death go by, the terrible rigged trials go by in silence or with only the lightest murmurs of concern.

Available evidence about these affairs was often scanty, fragmentary, puzzling, it is true. Spender, still uneasy about all this, as well he might be, says about the Moscow trials:

> Of course to the reader today the very idea that anyone could have thought them to be guilty is shocking, as it is to me myself. However, to understand the 30's one ought to realize that at the time it was not at all certain that they were innocent, despite the grotesqueness of some of the accusations made against them and the extravagance of their confessions. The reader who assumes that the innocence of the accused was common knowledge forty years ago should ask himself a few questions about current events to test the degree of knowledgeability about such that exist at the time of their happening. For example, how many people were killed in China on the death of Mao? What reasons does he have for supposing three Baader Meinhof terrorists who died in prison in October 1977 to have (a) committed suicide (b) been murdered? If he considers the available evidence on which he can consider these questions in 1978 he will appreciate how bemused we were in 1937 by the Soviet trials.

Spender has a point here. But he understates the amount of information available to the literate British public. The *Manchester Guardian,* to take only one example, printed long reports from reliably non-reactionary correspondents, and ran what was a sort of open forum on the issue. In France, André Gide had come back from an extended visit to Russia very disturbed by what he had seen, had left the Communist party, and published his *Retour de l'URSS* (1936) announcing his disenchantment. It is an uneven book, but it had clear and unequivocal information about the Stalinist terror of a kind that initiated a prolonged and intense open debate in France. Gide went on through the 30's writing exposés of the Moscow trials in the French press. Kingsley Martin reviewed the English translation in the *New Statesman* (January 1937), and pinpointed the main issues Gide had raised. Martin also wrote two articles, "Will Stalin Explain?" and "The European Nightmare," in which he moved in a gingerly fashion toward a position of doubt about the

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trials (though he could not escape the fatal 30's words: "Much may be justified by necessity"). Even in early 1937 there was enough information about the trials to give serious pause to any left-wing intellectual.

If we look at what was going on in the United States at this time and examine the reactions of American writers to the situation in Russia, the contrast is striking. In 1932, *Culture and Crisis* appeared; it was a pamphlet declaring general support for the Communist party, signed by many young American intellectuals, among others Newton Arvin, Erskine Caldwell, Malcolm Cowley, Sidney Hook, and Edmund Wilson. The young Lionel Trilling also seems to have been involved with this group. But by 1934 at least, fierce debate had got under way, and in 1935, as Daniel Aaron has recorded, Mark Van Doren, Clifton Fadiman, Newton Arvin, and Lionel Trilling had all resigned from the NDCCP, a fellow-traveling organization of writers dominated by the Communist party. Others stayed in, of course, but the debate over violence in Russia was public and vehement throughout the decade.

This intense debate was developed partly because Marxism in the U.S. was more sophisticated and had some intellectual tradition behind it, as it had not in England, and partly because, again unlike England, this country had a strong and articulate Trotskyist faction. Like the *New Statesman*, the *New Republic* responded to the Zinoviev trials, though it came down firmly on the side of the prosecution. It must be said that its editorials on this issue have an odious complacency about them. But other views were to be heard. In April 1937, for instance, Edmund Wilson was urging Malcolm Cowley to read the "Trotskyist and socialist stuff," and to check the evidence in the *International Review:* "I guess that all the trials have been fakes since the time of the Ramzin sabotage trial." The recent republication of Philip Rahv's essay on Dostoevsky's *The Possessed,* and of his remarkable 1938 essay on the Moscow prosecutions, "Trials of the Mind"*—its epigraph was "after such knowledge what forgiveness?"—reminds us of the part that the reborn anti-Stalinist *Partisan Review,* which was centrally a *literary* magazine, played in the American intellectuals' political consciousness in the late 30's.

RETURNING to England, we find that these violent and disturbing questions were largely ignored by the writers I have been dealing with. The violence in Russia raised hardly a flicker of interest. There is certainly nothing in *New Writing* about the trials,† nor is there mention of them in John Lehmann's autobiography. Day Lewis had nothing to say in his poetry, and his memoirs give a bland, even charming account of his adventures in the 30's. Of the forced collectivizations, the purges, the terrible trials, the secret police and their methods, not a word. Auden, as far as I can discover, said nothing either. When "Spain" was republished in 1940 he changed the phrase "necessary murder" to "the fact of murder," and later, after announcing that "false beliefs lead to bad poetry," he expunged the poem from his collected works as "all lies." He looked back on the 30's as "a low, dishonest decade," and by 1940 both he and Day Lewis had abandoned politics for good.

Spender, who has persisted in politics of one kind or another (in the 50's he tells us in the new book, he was "largely taken up with anti-Communism"), did pay some attention to the Russian trials in the 30's, and he reprints some of that writing here. Before turning to it I should say that to brandish his "Kill! Kill! Kill! Kill!" line now is a little less than fully just. *The Trial of a Judge,* as Louis MacNeice wrote at the time (Spender reprints his comment here in full), was intended to point out that liberalism was weak and that Communist violence was strong, but Spender's "unconscious integrity" ended up coming down on the side of the liberal judge after all. MacNeice made an amusing story of the reprimand handed out to Spender by the comrades after a Group Theater performance. It is also true that Spender's 30's poetry elsewhere presents a divided mind and an imagination uneasy, uncomfortable, even muddled, about the revolution and its human implications.

But now we come to the two 1937 pieces that Spender reprints having to do with the situation in Moscow. Neither of them does him any credit. First he includes the account he published in *New Writing* of the Writers International Congress held in Madrid in the summer of 1937. Fourteen years later, in his autobiography, *World Within World* (1951), he gave quite another version of that famous conference, a witty and cynical story of its "hidden theme." That theme was the Communist party versus the Gide of *Retour de l'URSS,* the Gide who was now attacking the trials at every opportunity. Spender made no mention in this revised version of his own earlier carefully laundered story, and for this he was taken to task, notably by Julian Symons in 1960. Now Spender gives us again that old and obviously misleading 1937 version with a brief comment that skates over the truth—that the purpose of the Congress was to attack Gide and whitewash the trials. What can

*In *Essays on Literature and Politics* (Houghton Mifflin, 1978).

†The other important literary magazine, *New Verse,* Geoffrey Grigson's lively, iconoclastic little magazine that published a great part of the best poetry to appear in the 30's in England, made a point of not being politically aligned. But its sympathies were clearly on the Left. I can find only one small note of uncertainty about the USSR in its files. In a special double-number (1938) on writing and political commitment, among the editor's brief notes and comments we find: "We are not Trotskyists, but we should like to know more about the arrest of Boris Pasternak."

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have made him reprint these old falsehoods in 1978?

And why does he republish his "I Join the Communist Party," a 1937 contribution to the London *Daily Worker* that he admits is "abject and shameful"? In the course of it, Spender apologized for having taken an incorrect view of the Moscow trials in his book *Forward from Liberalism,* published earlier in 1937 by Victor Gollancz's Left Book Club:

> When I wrote this book the Soviet trial had only just begun; I realized that if I ignored it the critics in the capitalist press might use it as an argument to refute the latter part of my book about the new Soviet constitution. I therefore thought that it was necessary for me to prejudge it against the USSR as far as possible. Some time before my book had appeared I had read the rest of the evidence and I became convinced that there had undoubtedly been a gigantic plot against the Soviet government and that the evidence was true. However it was too late for me to alter my book.

Well, many others were deceived, too. And Spender in his book, unlike most of his fellow writers, was at least exercised about the matter. Yet when one looks at the book Spender so abjectly apologized for, his comments there seem to illustrate as well as anything else the terrible ease with which the extremism of violence could be accepted by liberal consciences:

> In the New Constitution the Soviet has removed the main barrier to real liberty of thought and discussion: terror.

We know now that this was being written at the very point that Stalinist terror was being stepped up. We can let that pass. Lack of information? Misinformation? Naiveté? At worst wishful thinking? But then Spender turned to the aftermath of the Kirov assassinations. Here he expressed deep concern for the victims of the trials and of collectivization, and wondered seriously about the rule of law in Russia. Then he wrote:

> It is difficult to see how Russian Communism could have survived its appalling difficulties by any other means. Unfortunately the secret police are bloody as well as farcical. The savage reprisals which followed the murder of Kirov, in which, after summary trials, over a hundred people were shot, do show the system at its worst, and if public criticism is not to become a fatal disease in Russia it must soon be legalized.

"Fortunately," Spender added, reassuringly—and this is surely the true fellow-traveling spirit—"in the democratic countries . . . the price of socialism is not so great." Then he summed up in this chilling way: "It is only by realizing the penalties and mistakes as well as the strengths of dictatorship, that we can determine not to use such methods, *except in the face of urgent necessity.*" The poet's "necessary murder" again.

It is difficult to understand why Spender wants these dismal pieces to see the light of day. It is like an act of public masochism. Can they be intended as a penitential exercise? If so, they are hardly edifying. "To the man of intellect, pride is a primary necessity," said Philip Rahv in "Trials of the Mind." The best that can be said for Spender's offerings is that they turn the puzzled mind back inquiringly to those dark and confusing years, and challenge us yet again to try to get things straight about them.

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Guardian Angel

A Story

Sydor Rey

In memory of Dr. Janusz Korczak

MY FRIEND Henry took me aside to say his child had turned up in France and was coming to New York. He asked me to help him find the child a home. He was frightened—it was a mixture of tenderness and helplessness. Joining us, his wife repeated the whole story, and she too asked my help in finding a home for the child.

All of this was unexpected: I had not known anything about a child of Henry's in France. It turned out that in 1939 he had left a baby just a few months old in Paris with its mother, a Polish painter with whom he had lived for his last two years in France. The mother had died a martyr's death at Auschwitz, but before being deported from France she had entrusted her child to the janitor of her building. The janitor had looked after the child as if it were her own, and after the war had managed to get in touch with Henry through a friend of his, an American major. Spotting the major on the street the day the Allied armies entered Paris, she had asked him to her place, shown him the handsome boy, and made him solemnly promise to look up Henry and persuade him to bring the child to America, where it would be better off—after all, Henry was its father.

The major apparently understood his friend; soon after arriving in New York, he went to a party at which Henry and his wife happened to be among the guests; requesting the attention of everyone in the room, the major told the story of the child that had been left behind. No one except Henry and his wife had known about the child. Henry wept, swore that he would look after the child, and made his wife do the same. The major, who was a lawyer in civilian life, took care of the formalities.

Now Henry and his wife Mary stood helplessly before me, asking me to find a home for their child, although they were both native New Yorkers and I was the foreigner. Although they had no other children, it had not occurred to them that the child could live with them (actually they themselves did not even live together—Henry had his apartment, and Mary had hers). Henry was Mary's second husband; she had had a child by her first marriage but it had died in infancy as a result of her negligence, or so rumor had it. After the child's death, the couple had divorced and Mary had decided that her vocation was to be a nurse, and that a nurse must not have a family of her own.

Henry was an art historian, but despite his forty years he was still awaiting maturity. In the meantime, he made picture frames—quite lovely ones.

Both Henry and Mary felt it was my sacred duty to help them find a home for the child, and that the fulfillment of this duty would be a pleasure for me. It was my duty in their opinion because the child's mother had been my compatriot and a victim of Nazi persecution, and I should therefore be even more concerned about its well-being than its own father. And now it suddenly occurred to me that in all my thinking about Nazi murderers, I had somehow forgotten about the children—as though there had been no children among the millions of Nazi victims. Apparently, the concept of millions of martyred children had been more than I could endure.

Could I possibly feel guilty toward them? Since the enemy had been so bloodthirsty, weren't we exonerated with regard to the children? Or do we all feel like swindlers and traitors where children are concerned? After all, if we had always borne our children in mind this catastrophe would not have occurred. It is we who organize the world, not our children, and when we organize it in such a way that children, instead of growing up, must die, we betray life itself, we conspire with death against the young.

How could my imagination sustain the thought of innumerable children's corpses? The survivors themselves almost never mentioned the martyred children, either their own or other people's, and if they did, it was mainly to suggest that the high mortality rate of children under such circum-

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stances was quite comprehensible—they would say this as if it were we, the inexperienced ones, rather than they themselves who were in need of such an obvious explanation. Those who had been there dreaded the subject of children as much as those who had not. (I was told of one young woman who, while being transported to a death camp, had thrown her child into the river from a bridge, in order to increase her own chances of survival.)

I have never had children of my own, but my sister's children and my brother's and hundreds of children of more distant relatives and friends were killed by the Nazis. Moreover, in my student days I had once worked for a year as a counselor in a Warsaw orphanage. My parents had just died, and I was still young enough to feel terribly orphaned among the crowd of orphans, the oldest of whom were only a few years younger than I was. The children in the orphanage were serious, but not sad, and confident about the future. The director of the orphanage—a man who had devoted all his life to children—was one of the most eminent pedagogues of the century.

He was a physician descended from a wealthy intellectual family, and the author of unique, beautiful books for and about children; he himself was unmarried and childless. He lived in a small attic room in the orphanage he had founded many years before, after convincing a group of philanthropists that a new type of children's home was needed in which new educational methods could be tried out; its findings would benefit not only other such institutions, but parents also. The "Doctor," as we all called him, was motivated by compassion not only for orphans and children of the poor, but for all children. He believed that children are oppressed by adults, that the adult understands the child less than the child understands the adult, and that child-rearing must be based on cooperation between adults and children—in other words, that the child must participate. (The children of our institution practiced self-government, with splendid results.)

The orphanage was sunny and comfortable and equipped with all the modern conveniences, including a small hospital and a Turkish bath (one must remember that it had been founded before World War I). It was admired by specialists in the field from the most advanced European countries.

When Henry asked me to find a home for his child, I began thinking about the children from that orphanage, and wondering what had happened to them. I remembered how the first time I visited the bathhouse together with other members of the staff, the Doctor had suddenly approached me and appraising my body with his clear eyes, said in a soft warm voice: "So you're proud of your youth? Well, I ran away from youth, as from an insane asylum. . . ." Stubbornly, the question kept recurring: What did the doctor mean by this? Why had he said that he ran away from his own youth "as from an insane asylum," and why had he told this to me? Had he been afraid of youth, had he hated it? When does childhood end, and youth begin?

I did not understand why these questions preoccupied me so when my principal concern was with the fate of the orphans under Nazi occupation.

Not far from New York City, in the painters' colony of Woodstock at the foot of the mountains, a Frenchman, a certain Monsieur Ange, ran a small school. I was told about the school by my friend Alfred, a Polish painter, who had a house in the town, and I decided that this was the place for Henry's little son; I was sure that Monsieur Ange, who selected his pupils very carefully, would be interested in the boy. My artist friend, Alfred, was childless, and all the children of his relatives had perished in Poland and other German-occupied countries. Alfred too became interested in Henry's son, and drove me to Woodstock one day to visit the school.

It was early spring, and the vacationers had not yet arrived; the residents of the town, mostly painters, walked slowly through the streets, often stopping for no reason, like children or animals; they conversed in a relaxed way as if singing little songs to one another; clouds drifted across the sky, first white, then gray, and we strained our necks watching them. Woodstock, after New York, seemed like a soft dream. At night, as we sat by the glowing fireplace, Alfred said suddenly: "We live like little children here." (Later in the evening another painter came by to discuss with Alfred the idea of organizing a painters' union. The two of them did in fact resemble a pair of children who had decided to defend themselves against adult brutality—little boys conspiring in a criminal world.)

We were alone, Alfred's wife had remained in New York. His house, one of the oldest in town, was called "Mrs. Whitehead's Inn," and in the second half of the 19th century it had actually been an inn, frequented by almost all the prominent American painters. The proprietress, it was said, had thought of painters as helpless children, looking after them like a mother, and giving many of them meals for nothing; after her death, she was made the official patron of the local painters.

Alfred warned me that occasionally the ghost of Mrs. Whitehead appeared at night, but always for beneficent purposes; most often she appeared to guests who were spending the night in her house for the first time—and occasionally she enjoyed playing a prank on them.

In my sleep that night I felt an icy hand pressing my own, and I continued to feel it even after I awoke. With an effort I stopped myself from screaming, and pushed the strange hand away with my other hand. Suddenly something heavy

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fell on my pillow. I was about to scream again when I realized that the heavy object was my own hand on the pillow—it had been dead and was coming back to life. When I described the incident to Alfred later on, he said: "Mrs. Whitehead played a trick on you, the old lady treats us like children."

The morning was green and silvery. There was no sound except for the chirping of birds, who also seem so childlike, as the Doctor used to say in our orphanage in Warsaw. The morning seemed to be a world ruled by the laughter of children.

Monsieur Ange's house stood somewhat apart, on a wooded hill, and was accessible by a dirt road from the town. When we got there the children were just sitting down to breakfast. It turned out that Alfred and Monsieur Ange had spent time together as children in the same village, and now they behaved like childhood friends.

Monsieur Ange's school housed fifteen children between the ages of five and ten, including two of his own. A large collie remained constantly at the children's side, as calm and alert as if it were guarding a flock of sheep.

During breakfast I noticed that the children ate their meals alone: Madame Ange merely brought in the trays, then the children helped themselves, with the older ones serving the younger. Afterward, I realized that they had eaten in absolute silence. I thought at first that the silence was accidental, but the same thing was repeated during dinner and supper.

When I spoke of it to Monsieur Ange, he said: "Ah, we insist on silence during meals, absolute silence. You can't teach a child to speak just a little during meals; if you tell him he mustn't talk while eating, you must mean it literally. Silence during meals is a variety of rhythm, a rest, a diversion. We try not to separate discipline from playing; discipline is a game, and games are discipline. This silence during meals suits the children perfectly; we have animals here, and the children follow their example. And look how convenient it is for me: I sit in an adjoining room, working, and when I hear the slightest sound coming from a child's mouth, I know that something is wrong."

The Anges employed no help. In and around the house, few words were spoken. When Monsieur Ange was with the children, he was part of the group, like his dog, and seemed to direct the children wordlessly, through his personality alone. The day at Monsieur Ange's left in me a distinct rhythm—an impression of dance. The children seemed like a well-trained group of dancers. Curiously enough, for a group of active children, the impression left was one of motion, rather than sound.

MONSIEUR ANGE was handsome, of sallow complexion like a gypsy, almost tall, and very strong. He was educated and profound. I had never met anyone in whom thinking manifested itself to such an extent as a physical function—perhaps because his words were marked by the same economy and strength as the motions of his body. He dressed like a farmer and looked like a villager, as did his wife, an American woman who had been brought up in a French convent. She was pale, small, and had a strong and shapely body. She spoke rarely, but whenever she did, her words had two striking characteristics—they were the only words possible under the circumstances, and their tone was placating, regardless of what she was saying, as if this were their actual purpose.

Both husband and wife were the same age, and although he did not look any older than she, he seemed to be her father—she seemed to have been made out of one of his ribs. They were enormously civilized and subtle, and yet they reminded me of animals, a male and a female buffalo. Their physical animality aroused confidence and respect, and after a while one thought of them as a worthy peasant couple.

Monsieur Ange had graduated from the famous *Ecole Normale* in Paris and before the war had been a physical-training instructor in an aristocratic, semi-military private school for boys in France. It was only his great love for children that had induced this exceptionally well-educated man, with a profound knowledge of physics and mathematics, and in the prime of life, to become director of a children's home. He charged minimal fees for his pupils, just enough to cover his expenses and support his family. Each and every one of his carefully selected children was associated in some way with a tragic incident connected with the war.

HENRY'S son was exactly Monsieur Ange's kind of pupil, and when we showed him a photograph of the boy, Monsieur Ange thanked Alfred and me for having remembered his school—as though we had done him a great favor. The boy was eight years old, dark-haired, and blue-eyed like his father, and his name was Jan. Henry and Mary did not call him by a diminutive, and pronounced his name "Ian" in the German, rather than the English manner.

Jan spoke French and English, had perfect manners, and was tastefully dressed (for the past two years Henry had been sending money for his upkeep and education, and his guardian in Paris had sent the boy to an excellent school). He had apparently arrived with the idea of winning his father over, and after a few days in New York he made the same decision about Mary, his father's wife.

Soon after the boy arrived, Mary asked for a leave of absence from her job, took him into her flat, and began showing him off everywhere. (Parental feelings reach the human heart in diverse, occasionally circuitous, ways.) She suggested that

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Jan call her "mother," and the boy agreed at once: apparently he had brought love with him, and had not merely come in search of it. He often looked at Henry with an expression suggesting that he, the child, intended to take care of his father.

Henry's fear and embarrassment vanished: he began to be proud of his child, as if to say, "Look what a son I've brought up." When the time came to take Jan to Monsieur Ange's, he did not even suggest that I go along, although he had never been there before—to do this would have offended his fatherly pride; and when he told Mary she could accompany the two of them, he spoke as if he were doing her a favor.

Henry referred to his son with respect, not because Jan was an exceptional child, but because he symbolized a great tragedy, a memorial, and a warning.

WHEN Henry took Jan to Monsieur Ange's place without asking me to go along, I felt like a father who has suddenly lost all his children. I thought of my brother's little daughter, of my sister's little son, and of the orphans in that Warsaw orphanage in which I had once worked under the great Doctor. I was sure that those orphans had been killed under the Nazi occupation, and I wanted to know how they had died. Since they were a group, they must have been slaughtered en masse, and the business must have been organized with German precision. I told myself that if I could find out how the children of our orphanage had died, I would know exactly how millions of other children had died. Then one day I came across a book from which I learned everything.

Under the Nazi occupation, the orphanage had been moved to the Warsaw Ghetto, and the great Doctor, who was of Jewish ancestry, though not a practicing Jew himself, continued to direct it. War was nothing new to him—he had fought in the Russo-Japanese war, World War I, and the Polish-Soviet war. Accordingly, on the first day of the war, in 1939, he put on his colonel's uniform and wore it to the very end. In the meantime, this great educator and old soldier continued to do his work, thinking that after all the children were children, and they would somehow survive the massacre.

Then one day the Angel of Death appeared to him in a German uniform, and declared that the children must go, but that he, the Doctor, could remain behind.

How could the children die without him?

The Doctor brought his orphans to the train, telling them they were being taken on a trip to the country where they could play in the fields and woods. Throughout the journey, the children merrily sang Polish songs. When they got to their destination—Treblinka—the train stopped and the Doctor told his charges that in the country, one had to bathe; so saying, he led them to the gas chamber. The guards at first tried to keep the Doctor from entering, but he insisted, telling them that the German authorities in Warsaw had given him permission to die with his children. When they were inside, and the door was locked behind them, the Doctor told his children to lie down on the floor with him and breathe deeply. Thus the orphans died with their Doctor, and their bodies were burned at the German crematorium at Treblinka.

I RECALLED my first meeting with the Doctor in the bathhouse of the Warsaw orphanage. Why had he said, "I ran away from youth as from an insane asylum"?

I had lived with the Doctor under one roof for a whole year, and I kept in touch with him for several years after that. I know what a great man he was and am happy to have had the privilege of knowing him. Yet when I read about his fate and the fate of the orphans, I could not help thinking of the sheep in the Chicago slaughterhouse, which are led to their death by a specially trained sheep called the "Judas" ram.

Is such a ram really a Judas, a traitor, or has he merely lost his instinctive fear of death, going willingly because he is not afraid and thereby causing the sheep to follow him?

I recalled how, long before Hitler, the Doctor, during one of his regular talks to his staff, had described with horror how in nurseries in the Soviet Union children were sometimes given opium in order to keep them quiet.

What a terrible irony of fate!

I HAD been waiting a long time for the chance to tell Jan's guardian about the tragedy of the Warsaw orphans and their guardian. When Henry had first asked me to find a home for his son, I had expected to become very involved, but nothing had come of it. When Henry and Mary first took Jan to Monsieur Ange's, without even asking me along, I was left with a sense of unfulfillment. I felt the need to do something for this child, but what? Then one day Henry and Mary invited me to visit the school, and it became clear to me that the most valuable and natural thing I could do for Jan would be to tell Monsieur Ange about the fate of the Jewish orphans. This would be my gift not only to Jan but to the whole group of Monsieur Ange's children. (Monsieur Ange himself had lived as a child in a number of Central and Eastern European countries, and somehow each of his pupils came directly or indirectly from one of those countries.)

I had taken along Witold Zechenter's beautiful poem about the death of the Jewish orphans and their noble guardian, and I read it aloud in my own rough translation at Monsieur Ange's. The

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children were asleep, and Monsieur Ange, Madame Ange, Henry, Mary, and I sat on the porch, surrounded by darkness. As I read the poem, the tears bloomed in our eyes, as naturally as blossoms on trees in the spring. I told them of the question that kept haunting me: why had the Doctor said, "I ran away from youth as from an insane asylum"?

Monsieur Ange got up from his seat and stood very straight. "An educator must not be glad that he has his youth behind him," he said. "That is like being glad he has his life behind him, that he finds himself beyond the children's world. An educator must not look at the children's world from another world. The leader must be one of the herd. The shepherd should be, so to speak, the first sheep."

We sat talking until late at night, and before we went to sleep, Monsieur Ange led me to his cellar for a drink. There I saw a great variety of homemade liqueurs, tools for carpentry and metal work, and a long table with two benches next to it; on the wall hung a fowling piece, a rifle, and an automatic. Noticing my look of surprise, Monsieur Ange smiled, and said: "I am here in the wilderness with a flock of sheep. We don't know when the wolf may come, and in what disguise."

We spent three days at Monsieur Ange's—he had several guest rooms for visitors. The children were cheerful, and were enjoying themselves, but at the same time they seemed to tower above us adults by their calm, their peculiar rhythm; there could be no doubt that we were inferior to them. Occasionally their peculiar rhythm seemed to communicate a sense of strangeness toward us, a certain reticence.

I called Monsieur Ange's attention to this fact.

"Children know perfectly well that we are stronger than they are," he said, "and that we take brutal advantage of our greater strength. By their behavior, their reserve, they try to arouse our respect for them, and thus protect themselves against us. They know they have only one remedy against our savagery—charm. They know that they oppose our physical superiority with spiritual power alone."

He pointed out the sensible and systematic way in which Jan had gone about winning over his father and stepmother. Monsieur Ange was convinced that Jan would eventually open their eyes, that Henry would decide to raise a family and take his son in to live with him, that Jan would get what he wanted. Children are very intelligent, he said, and it is best for the educator to remain a child; that is perhaps why he should have children of his own.

It happened that Monsieur Ange had heard a great deal about the Warsaw Doctor and had read some of his works. In his view the Doctor had been a saintly man, pure and saintly to the point of forgetting how far human brutality could go. But the children had not forgotten, as could be seen even from Zechenter's poem. (Monsieur Ange asked for a copy of my translation.) The children had sensed the danger, like sheep, but they had followed their leader, who no longer feared death because he had run away from youth as from an insane asylum.

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A Reading of Ruth

Evelyn Strouse and Bezalel Porten

SINCE Hebrew is not the second language of most of the educated world, the verbal virtuosity of the Scroll of Ruth is difficult to demonstrate and the average reader must take it on faith. It is nonetheless a nice irony that the poverty of Hebrew, whose vocabulary is mainly expanded by fusion and vocalic change, can achieve assonance, homophony, and alliteration impossible in English. The Scroll of Ruth pivots, as it were, on four words and inflections thereof: go, stay, return, redeem. Among English poets only Blake, in the *Songs*, attains such spareness and simplicity.

The story, a complicated one, is quickly summarized: Elimelech, his wife Naomi, and their two sons, Mahlon and Chilion, leave Bethlehem in the famine-stricken land of Judah for Moab, where they remain for ten years. Elimelech dies, his sons marry the Moabites, Ruth and Orpah, die in their turn, and Naomi decides to return to Bethlehem. Heedless of Naomi's protests, Ruth returns with her, and they arrive in time for the harvest season. The crops have flourished, especially in the fields of Boaz, a kinsman of Elimelech, where Ruth goes to glean. Boaz notices her at once, is generous with her, tells his men to treat her kindly, and makes sure that she has extra grain to take home to her mother-in-law. At the end of the season, Naomi tells Ruth to go at night to the threshing floor, where Boaz has been celebrating with his men and where he will sleep, keeping watch over the tied and winnowed sheaves. Ruth, without letting herself be seen, is to take careful note of the place where Boaz lies and, when he has fallen asleep, to go to him, uncover his feet, and lie down. All this Ruth accomplishes, and when Boaz awakes she informs him that he is her next of kin, in short, that he has marriage claims upon her. This he contradicts, explaining that there *is* a closer kinsman with a prior right. He promises to discuss the matter with this person the following morning; if he is prepared to redeem Ruth and the land, well and good; if not, Boaz will do so. In the meantime he suggests that Ruth stay the night, leaving before dawn, however, to preserve her anonymity. She concurs: before she leaves she is given grain to take to Naomi. Returned home, she and Naomi await the encounter with the unnamed close relative, who, it transpires, must, because of inheritance problems, concede his right of redemption to Boaz. Amid praise and rejoicing, Boaz marries Ruth; a child is born to them, and the eventual line to King David firmly established.

Like all biblical stories, this one neither lingers nor moralizes, but records without stridency despair, courage, loyalty, love, and hope. It develops character, builds and resolves tension, and looks both backward and forward, its final verses not so much an ending as a continuation. Of greater formal significance, it is constructed like a sonata, whose central themes of death and restoration are restated and reworked so that form is inseparable from content: the two major melodies, or narrative threads, are played on verbal instruments that precisely match and further the action.

The resemblance to a classical sonata is exact. The first half is an exposition of the subject of death (in various forms: of the land, of husband and sons, of a family name), with a transitional passage toward the other theme, restoration; the second half develops the idea of restoration, recapitulates both themes, and adds a coda. The first, third, and fourth chapters—statement and recapitulation—are of similar length; the second chapter, leading to and expanding upon restoration, is longer than the others. Like the same movement in a sonata, it is written andante, is the most richly modulated, and has the most to do. Even so, this whole sonata-narrative is fully orchestrated in the space of eighty-five Hebrew verses, or a six-sonnet sequence with a verse left over.

In a kind of anticipatory counterpoint, Chapter 1 states the major theme of death and couples it with the minor one of return, which heralds restoration. Less forthrightly, but with the insistence of a chord played in the bass, the theme of waiting is inserted, and will recur throughout the book, either opening or closing the succeeding chapters. It mediates between death and restoration. Rilke says in one of the *Duino Elegies* that "staying is nowhere"; here staying or waiting is God-decreed, analogous to prayer, implying acquiescence and belief in the ultimate magnanimity of the Lord. While the great themes of death and restoration can be said to be in the tonic key, the supplementary theme of waiting is in the minor, always pulsing beneath the primary music.

Thus the first chapter uses, repeats, and modifies three of the four words that move the narrative from Bethlehem to Moab and back, that engineer both a marriage and a conversion, and that bring forth a historic child. They went to Moab; they stayed; they returned to Bethlehem. Eight times in twenty-two verses the word "go"

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or a variation of it appears; once, "stay" (a concept, however, that is reinforced by synonyms); twelve times, "return." In Hebrew a single verb can do the work of several, both by inflection and nuance. Thus the word "restore," besides being one of the two major themes, is also "return," inflected. To the undisturbed root an intensifier is added. Even more subtly, "stay" (more commonly translated "sit" in modern Hebrew) plays upon "return"; the key sounds are identical, approximated in English by the words "sojourn" and "journey." And best of all, perhaps, the Hebrew word for "seven" employs two of the same key letters as "stay," in the same order, and becomes, in Chapter 4, a holy, even an oracular, number.

THE tempo of the first chapter, with its emphatic going and returning, is lively. A family leaves its dying land only to be trailed by death in another. The husband dies, the sons die, the three widows are barren. Rumor stirs in the silent house: the Lord has once again given bread to the people of Bethlehem, literally "house of bread." The phrasing of the rumor is liquid with "l's" and "m's" and is a rhymed couplet; its sound may be suggested by a loose translation like, "The Lord enlarged his land with largesse," but the rhyme cannot be duplicated.

The narrative moves quickly forward. On the heels of the rumor, Naomi starts for Bethlehem, counseling her daughters-in-law to return to their mother's house, not to stay with a woman empty of seed, empty of sons, too old to conceive. And were she young enough, she adds, clinching the argument, would her daughters-in-law wait until the sons she might bear grew to manhood? Over and over she exhorts them. Barren she may be, unrestorable, but she is full of words, long solo passages of explanation and entreaty. Orpah heeds her words, but Ruth, unmoved by her sister's example, "clings" to Naomi, a concept that will be developed farther on in another context. Speaking the verses that most of us know, Ruth pleads to go with Naomi, to remain with her, raising the act of staying (although the verb is never used) to the status of primary theme. It will become apparent that Ruth, who embodies restoration, is, by her monumental ability to stay, to wait, to cleave to, to cling, the quintessential server, bearer of a son Obed, in Hebrew "servant."

Except for Ruth's plea, all the lines in this chapter are Naomi's. It concludes with her tirade to the women of Bethlehem, gathered at the gate to greet her: "Call me Mara, the Bitter One, for the Lord has dealt ill with me." Her lips are sealed only by the final passage, wherein she and Ruth, having returned from Moab, have returned at the beginning of the barley harvest.

Used twice in this last sentence, the word "return" doubly announces the theme of restoration, emphasized yet more insistently by the word "beginning." Having opened his chapter with departure, the scribe closes with return, coming full circle geographically but preparing ideologically for a new departure, a new beginning.

And what a fanfare ushers in this second long, crowded, colorful movement, which will move unhurriedly toward the climax. "Naomi had a kinsman of her husband's, a man of wealth . . . whose name was Boaz." Boaz is named for strength, as Ruth's late husband Mahlon was named for sickness, his brother for destruction. To the fields of Boaz the Strong, Ruth goes to glean, fields as alien to her as were the fields of Moab to Elimelech and his family, fields as prodigal now as ten years earlier they had been parsimonious. Will these fields, through Ruth, restore life to Naomi as they had restored sustenance to the people of Bethlehem? "Let me glean among the grain," she says to Naomi, "after him in whose eyes I find favor" (a direct translation from the Hebrew, in which there is no other way to say "admire").

THE submissive Ruth, who asked only to stay with her mother-in-law, to wait upon the will of the Lord, has made her second positive move. Her speech, like her actions, is economical: two balanced sentences gave notice of her intention to return to Judah; a simple one of her intention to find both food and a man. The key to her relationship with Naomi, that woman of many words and many moods, is her quiet indomitability.

Luck is with her, because Boaz has chosen this day to visit his fields and spots her at once. He inquires of his foreman about the identity of this foreigner (the foreman is described as a young man, Ruth as a young girl, a Hebrew pairing that would be matched in English if we could transform "youth" into "youthess"). Told who she is, Boaz approaches her, calls her "my daughter," advises her to glean in his fields and no other, and to stay close to the women. As Ruth had clung to Naomi, now she is to cling to the female harvesters; this is to the point. Boaz has a few more favors to bestow: drink when you are thirsty, he tells Ruth, and do not fear the young men, who have been charged not to molest you.

The ambiguities in Boaz's speech are striking. His mode of address, "my daughter," suggests the solicitude of a middle-aged man for a much younger woman; his warnings against the predatoriness of his fieldhands may even confirm this. But why "keep close to my maidens"; why "do not glean in another field"; why "drink when you are thirsty"—with their clear message of concern clumsily concealed beneath the sobriquet "my daughter"? Is Boaz thus stifling his rising regard, denying to himself an interest removed from the fatherly?

WHATEVER the answer, Ruth, normally so laconic in word and deed, falls on her face before him and, with a passion hitherto displayed only in her plea to Naomi, repeats as a question her earlier statement, "Why have I found favor in your eyes, that you should notice me, a foreigner?" The sounds, superb in Hebrew, if translated phonologically yet preserving the essence, might read, "I, an alien, within your eyes lie." The narrator exploits to the fullest the theme of restoration. He gives us a nubile young woman who has, so to speak, lain fallow, directs her to a field bursting with life, whose proprietor, though elderly,

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is stirred by the life in his own loins. Like King David who, when he was full of years, lay with the young virgin Abishag the Shunamite, Boaz finds comfort in Ruth's freshness. While he invokes God's blessing upon her—may God reward you, he says, and shelter you under his wing—he makes sure at the same time to confer his own, more mundane blessings: food and drink at his table, and something extra to take home to Naomi. In effect he has transsubstantiated God's wing into his own.

However auspicious Ruth's first day of gleaning, she is thereafter consigned to waiting. Her faithful trek each day to the field, her obedient trotting after the women, her reward of extra grain continue without further reference to her benefactor. Boaz never speaks to her again; indeed, so far as the narrator is concerned, he has appeared in the field for the first and last time. In spite of the fact that after his conversation with Ruth he has arranged with the foreman to let her glean wherever she wants—not only, in accordance with the law, at the edges of the field; in spite, too, of his provision that extra wheat be dropped for her from the sheaves bound for his own use, the reader's hopes are dashed: expectation does not betoken fulfillment.

But the reader has reckoned without Naomi. Her busy brain has stored away all the information Ruth has brought her, has calculated the meaning of Boaz's material kindness, and has found in it a cultivable promise. When Ruth came home on that first day and began to tell Naomi what had happened, a conversation took place, a bit breathlessly ingenuous on Ruth's part and more than a bit promotional on Naomi's, as she lavished praise on Boaz, reminded Ruth of his near kinship, and warned her to stay with the women and avoid being molested. Naomi's voice as usual surrounds and engulfs Ruth's; in answer to all Naomi's questions, brief prayers, snippets of information, and torrents of advice, Ruth has spoken two short sentences, and the chapter's penultimate verse is Naomi talking. The narrator silences her only to tell us that Ruth gleaned until the end of the barley and wheat harvests, and stayed with her mother-in-law.

She has continued to "cling," continued to "stay"; to what purpose? Naomi has a yeasty substance in her hands that performs the task allotted, but can be self-starting, can rise unkneaded to challenge. Now the season is over; Boaz has vanished as thoroughly as the angel of the Lord, and Naomi sets about reversing the dictum that man proposes and God disposes. She begins with a variation on the restoration theme, asking whether she should find a home that "will be good" for Ruth. In Chapter 1 she had turned to the Lord, beseeching Him to find a home and a husband for Ruth and Orpah, a place of rest and a man in whose eyes they would find favor. (The Hebrew uses not "home" but "repose", or "resting place"; respite. Similarly, "rest" in Hebrew is an anagram of "favor," so that they reinforce and complement each other.) Now, appealing directly to Ruth, Naomi shifts the responsibility from the Almighty's shoulders to her own.

She does not wait for Ruth's reply, but plunges immediately into exposition. With the harvesting at an end, Boaz and his men will be winnowing the grain tonight and celebrating the abundance of the yield. They will eat and drink, and afterward the men will leave and Boaz will lie down amid the plenty of the threshing floor to sleep untroubled until the first light of dawn. Wash, dress, anoint yourself, she tells Ruth, "and go down to the threshing floor, but do not make yourself known to the man until he has finished eating and drinking." She must see, yet not be seen, note Boaz's precise position so that she can move stealthily, without signaling her presence, to the place where he lies. Then she is to uncover his feet, lie down, "and he will tell you what to do."

Uncovering Boaz's feet is a formal as well as a textual device. It is a kind of prior echo of the still unheard words of the climax. With the simple command, "uncover his feet," Naomi has turned oracle. We have seen that she is less taciturn than most oracles and Ruth less verbose than the average supplicant; characteristically, then, to Naomi's spate of four verses Ruth replies, "All that you say I will do," four words in Hebrew, tersely impressive.

Now the pace deliberately and dramatically slows. We have rushed through Moab and Bethlehem, paused a moment while a rich old man and a shy young girl exchanged courtesies, have hardly had time to sorrow over the abortiveness of that meeting, have threshed and winnowed wheat and barley, and under and over and through it all have listened to Naomi's voice, muted, hortatory, bewildered, seductive. Here it stops. Economy is sacrificed to tension, and the narrator repeats—not words, which he delights to do, but the entire previous section. Ruth goes to the threshing floor. Boaz eats and drinks—here an addition: "and his heart was merry"—and at last lies down. Ruth approaches and uncovers his feet. At midnight Boaz wakes, starts, cries, "Who are you?" And Ruth answers, her words playing on the silence like a single violin, "I am Ruth your maidservant; spread your skirt over your maidservant, for you are next of kin."

The verbal density of her lines is richer in the Hebrew than in the English, because all the Hebrew words, or their variants, have been spoken before. In her first encounter with Boaz, Ruth wonders at his kindness to her and tells him that he has acted as though she were his maidservant, "although I am not your maidservant." At this point she reverses herself: I am your maidservant and, she implies, I want to be treated so. Also in that first encounter Boaz says that because Ruth has clung to Naomi, he prays that the Lord, "under whose wings you have come to take refuge," will reward her. Now Ruth, in yet another reversal, asks that Boaz—her lord—give her refuge under his wing, in the identical phrase used earlier by her benefactor. Finally, she informs him that he is next of kin, the redeemer; in short, entitled to her hand. This is extremely sophisticated

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synechdoche; it restates the theme of restoration by means of a word, redeemer, whose first and last letters are the first and second letters of "uncover." (The same quantitative difference exists in the English "rip" and "repair.")

BUT fulfillment is not yet. Ruth's final thrust, "for you are next of kin," is neatly parried by Boaz's courteous blessing and especially by his mode of address: "my daughter." But then he speaks a line that responds like a cello to Ruth's violin. "This last kindness," he tells her, "[is] greater than the first, in that you have not gone after young men, whether rich or poor." The first evidence of Ruth's devotion (a closer translation than kindness), he is saying, was to Naomi; the second, and more cogent, to himself. The importance of her coming to him in the night is not the act but the abstinence that preceded it: she has not sought the favors of younger men, whatever their station and however strong (it is implied) their attraction to her. And therefore he tells her, as Ruth has just told Naomi, "I will do all that you ask," adding that the whole town knows that she is a woman of valor. There are not many so characterized in the Bible, and here Ruth takes her place in their radiant number.

Boaz cannot, however, make a commitment because of the complication of a kinsman closer than he, whom, for all her talking, Naomi has never mentioned. Having thus put the record straight, Boaz parenthetically suggests that Ruth stay the night (parenthetically because the suggestion is sandwiched between the disclosure about the nearer kinsman and the assertion that Boaz, if possible, will assume that kinsman's rights). He leaves no room for doubt that he will yield if the prior claimant so demands or that he will himself fill the claimant's place if given the chance. Having declared himself, he appears to think it appropriate to repeat his invitation, and once more, somewhat peremptorily, he tells Ruth to lie down.

The theme of restoration has been developed; Ruth will find her redeemer, but not yet and not necessarily Boaz. Who is this cunningly concealed closest of kin? Is he young or old, rich or poor, married or single? The reader questions, the narrator teases, but Ruth remains consistent. She lies down.

THEY awake very early, "before one could recognize the other," and Boaz at once evinces his regard for Ruth by telling her to leave while it is still dark. Her reputation must be preserved, her distinction as a woman of valor unsullied. And something more. She is not to go empty-handed to her mother-in-law; the solicitude that Boaz has always shown for the health and sustenance of both women, though measured out in barley, transcends measurement. The narrator never lets the reader lose sight of Boaz's courtliness and generosity; the night spent with Ruth is a fact of life, hardly mentioned and hardly worth mentioning; the gift of grain is a fact of spirit.

So Ruth apparently believes, because in answer to Naomi's question, "How did you fare, my daughter?" she offers the sheaves of barley as proof of the bond she has forged, themselves symbolic of redemption. Does the fruitfulness of the land augur the fruitfulness of Ruth; the plenty of Boaz's fields the potency of a childless bachelor? Events are fast concluding, but we are not yet to know how. We must, as Naomi tells Ruth, her words ending the chapter, as they began it, sit down and wait; for Boaz will not rest until the matter is settled.

As Ruth waits, so does Boaz. The final movement, the fourth chapter, plays another variation on the great minor theme of waiting: Boaz sits at the city gate, in the company of the elders, anticipating the arrival of the nearest of kin. Tension is high: the kinsman quickly appears; Boaz hails him, asks him to stop a minute; the tension heightens as in slow motion. Boaz seats the relative, gathers ten of the elders, invites them to sit, watches them do so. In excruciating detail he intones the story of Naomi, describes the parcel of land belonging to Elimelech, points out that it can be redeemed by the kinsman, or, if he does not want it, by Boaz, who is next in line. The kinsman says, "I will redeem it," and the reader reels.

But the voice of Boaz is not stilled. Sometimes in a sonata, with all the instruments in a frenzy of crescendo, the winds suddenly descend and make a sober statement. So Boaz: "The day you buy the field, you are buying Ruth the Moabitess, the widow of the dead, in order to restore the name of the dead to his inheritance." And the next of kin: "I cannot redeem it lest I impair my own inheritance." The shock of his original acceptance turns his refusal into anticlimax, and the narrator must create a diversion, cozen his audience, before he builds toward the finale.

He therefore inserts himself for a moment to explain that in those days it was customary in Israel to confirm a transaction by removing one's shoe and handing it to the person with whom one is making the exchange. So that when the next-of-kin says, "I cannot redeem it . . . take my right of redemption yourself," he conforms to custom and draws off his sandal. And thus the words of Naomi, "Uncover his feet," are heard once again, this time with the poignancy of prophecy and fulfillment.

Still allowing us emotional breathing space, the narrator has Boaz say, his voice barely edged with triumph, "You are witnesses this day that I have bought from the hand of Naomi all that belonged to Elimelech. . . . Also Ruth the Moabitess I have bought to be my wife, to perpetuate the name of the dead in his inheritance. . . ." In these two verses Boaz recapitulates a second time the themes of death and restoration; in the next two, the people at the gate expand upon restoration, not only of the line of Boaz but of the whole land, verdant now and rich in promise. They compare Ruth to Rachel and Leah, builders of the house of Israel, and pray that the house of Boaz will be great, like the house of Perez his ancestor, exalted by the children Ruth will bear.

They married: "And he went in to her, and the Lord gave her conception, and she bore a son." Now

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for the first time in this chapter, Naomi reappears, and for the first time in the book she is silent. The women do all the talking, thanking God for this child who "shall be to you a restorer of life and a nourisher of your old age, for your daughter-in-law who loves you, who is more to you than seven sons, has borne him." Ruth, in restoring Naomi, has restored Israel; Ruth, who is "more than seven sons," has brought a son to Boaz, the seventh generation. Ruth, the one who waits, is glorified by the number seven, which in Hebrew reflects and plays upon the word "to sit," "to wait," as the combining form "sept" adds a consonant to "sit."

Naomi warned in the first chapter that no more sons would be born to her. Now the women have the last word: "A son has been born to Naomi": a son named Obed, father of Jesse, father of David, himself according to one tradition a seventh son. To the words of the women Naomi need add nothing.

But the narrator finds it necessary for the neatness of his design to append a coda. To remind us that he began his book by having Elimelech and his family stay ten years in Moab, to return us to the beginning, and to signal a future beginning, he recites the ten generations that started with Perez, Boaz's ancestor, and will culminate in David, Boaz's great-grandson.

Fiction

Literary Waifs

Pearl K. Bell

Short stories have singular virtues. They are short. They can be read in one sitting. Like a witty epigram or a clever joke, they can realize their meaning through surprise, or through an abruptly decisive ending which may be charged with ambiguity but nonetheless leaves the reader with a sense of dramatic completeness. In sum, they make a point, satisfying but not necessarily crude or simple, that eliminates any craving for further incident or explanation. And precisely because short stories are distinguished by their discrete finality, a curious difficulty arises when they are collected in book form. Reading so many stories consecutively we become surfeited with discontinuous shocks and surprises, unable to absorb all the abbreviated varieties of plot and character that are related to each other only by the consistencies of temperament and manner of one writer.

Yet writers, particularly prolific writers, *will* collect their stories, and editors reprint them in anthologies, because, deprived of the permanence of books, the separate pieces published in magazines would be consigned to oblivion. The short story, as Ted Solotaroff remarks in his introduction to *The Best American Short Stories 1978*,* is "the most beleaguered of our literary forms . . . the waif of the magazine and publishing industry." Publishers naturally take a jaundiced view of story collections because they are notoriously poor sellers, and the magazines that regularly print serious fiction *and* pay decently can be counted on three unequal fingers: the *New Yorker*, *Esquire*, and that peculiar Janus-head of porn and culture called *Playboy*.

But if the fate of most short stories published in America these days is predictably unhappy—read today, gone from memory tomorrow—the blame cannot be laid entirely on publishing economics or the fickle taste of readers or the paucity of magazines: which brings me back to the problem of stories collected in hefty volumes. The shortcomings of particular stories are cruelly accentuated by the context of a book, as they are not in a magazine, because similar mannerisms and devices, repeated in story after story, acquire the irritating visibility of a tic. Instead of demonstrating the slow growth of a strong, original talent, an overstuffed omnibus like Irwin Shaw's *Short Stories: Five Decades*,† full of slick and derivative epiphanies, reads like a case of arrested development. Even Shaw's famous "The Girls in Their Summer Dresses," which I remembered as a small gem of deft observation, now seems little more than a clever vulgarization of Fitzgerald.

In annual compilations like *The Best American Short Stories*, which the late Martha Foley edited without much adventurousness for four decades, any detectable unity depends not on the characteristics

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Pearl K. Bell *is our regular fiction critic.*

* Houghton Mifflin, 398 pp., $10.95.
† Delacorte, 756 pp., $14.95.

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of a single author but on the taste of the editor. And one of the surprises of this year's collection is the radical change of taste that its editor, Ted Solotaroff, seems to have undergone since the days when he was known as Theodore Solotaroff and ran the now defunct *American Review*, a paperback periodical of new writing. During the ten-year life of the *Review*, Solotaroff was inexhaustibly receptive to bizarre-or-be-damned extremes of experimental fiction which flouted every traditional idea of the short story with such unconstrained audacity that, as he now confesses, he eventually gave up "even wanting to distinguish the short story from [a great variety of] innovations in narrative writing . . . simply billing whatever wasn't poetry as 'prose.'"

Obviously, such generously inclusive vagueness would from the start defeat an editor who has accepted the onerous task of deciding which stories, out of the thousands printed in America and Canada in 1977, in hundreds of magazines big and little, deserve the encomium "best," and this may in part explain why Solotaroff has sternly reconsidered the woozy 60's notion that all formal literary distinctions are obsolete. So out have gone such old reliables as "novels-in-progress, . . . memoirs, lyrical meditations, or involuted narratives or monologues," along with "experiments in the non-linear story, the anti-plot story, the characterless character story." Having cleared the decks of all that turgid fragmentation, all that monotonous indeterminacy and impressionistic chaos, Solotaroff now plumps unequivocally for stories that defend "the human scale of experience . . . against the forces that seek to diminish and trivialize it" (as if such banality does not diminish it!).

EXPECTING a wholly different book from this editor, I was relieved to find that among the twenty-two stories Solotaroff found worthy of distinction, there are no tricks, no games, no rough beasts of the avant-garde slouching toward bedlam. These exemplary American stories are in the main superbly tooled; their intentions and methods are entirely (well, most of the time) accessible but not predictable. But many of them are marred by self-gratulatory self-consciousness that calls more attention to the writer than to what he is trying to achieve. The worst offender in this regard is "The Translation," by the ubiquitous and tireless Joyce Carol Oates, about an American intellectual who, during a lecture tour of a Communist country, becomes infatuated with a woman he can talk to only through an interpreter. Neither Miss Oates's characters nor the customs of the country stand a chance against her mannered prose, which smothers a slight conceit in clouds of dithery self-regard.

A much more substantial piece of work, Leslie Epstein's "Skaters on Wood," describes an amateur performance of *Macbeth* in the ghetto theater of a provincial Polish town during the war. Actors and audience, Jews and doomed, try to lose themselves in the hilariously inept spectacle onstage, hoping to blot out the whistle of the train waiting to transport them to the death camp. The idea of the story is wonderful, but Epstein's elaborately ironic counterpoint between the absurd Shakespearean "entertainment" about highborn murder and the actuality of the Holocaust is obtrusively didactic. Like quite a few of these stories, "Skaters on Wood" excites one's admiration for its literary ingenuity, but does so at the expense of a more valuable response to its tragic subject. Even in stories whose subject has none of the terrible urgency of Epstein's—stories about tennis, mountain-climbing, beekeeping, windmill-building—the authors are often too keenly aware of their virtuosity, which can engross them so mightily that they lose sight of the fictional experience itself.

Interestingly, the two best (to my mind) of *The Best* are by one of the oldest contributors, Peter Taylor, and one of the youngest, James Kaplan, who is still in his twenties. Taylor's "In the Miro District" and Kaplan's "In Miami, Last Winter" are deceptively casual accounts of young manhood, richly evocative narratives about unfinished personalities in the process of attaining some permanent form of maturity. While Taylor's middle-class Southerner gravely fails the test he needs to pass, Kaplan's New York chess player is spiritually enlarged by the crisis he survives. The war between grandson and grandfather in Taylor's story is a conflict of temperaments and character, not generations. For once it is youth, not age, that is stuffy and conventional, the grandson deeply embarrassed by an eccentric grandfather who refuses to play the role of adorable codger reminiscing (the time is 1925) about the War Between the States. Stubbornly independent, old Major Manley scorns "the rules and mores of my parents' Nashville life," and when he is finally forced to give in to their incorrigible gentility and becomes a lovable old bore who can be patronized and controlled, the young man's mindless pleasure in his grandfather's defeat is as much his loss as the old man's. Though Taylor exposes the young narrator's weakness with marvelously quiet subtlety, the story seems all the more powerful and sad for the unemphatic ease of its telling. Kaplan is just as commendably unmoved by the siren lure of verbal dazzle, deftly turning young Paul Stein's passion for chess into a long ceremony of innocence that comes to an abrupt and bitter halt with the end of childhood. Chess is the boy's single-minded obsession—a special form of adolescent oddness and withdrawal—and he slowly learns that he must free himself from the game if he is to survive in a world that to the incurable chess freak is merely "disordered, distracting, superfluous." Kaplan invests the young man's final release from his obsessive captivity with great pathos, since Paul must acknowledge the hard fact that he is not a genius, but he has triumphantly come through his rite of passage.

IN THE Solotaroff volume, even the wildly unpredictable writers regard language as a tool that can intensify, illuminate, clarify experience, a means of order and expressive perception that can be shared with the reader. But in the eight stories that Susan Sontag has put together

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under the blunt title *I, etcetera,** language erects a barrier between writer and reader which can be surmounted, if at all, only through a supreme effort of unriddling. Or, to put it another way, she constructs a maze through which we must wander unaided by metaphoric maps or clues, lured down an infinity of devious paths that lead to no center, no exit, no light, no pleasure. Yet one of the anomalies of *I, etcetera*, given Miss Sontag's determination to be opaque, deliberately misleading, *new*, is the involuntary way that ordinary, unremarkable experience and feeling occasionally break out, confounding her best intentions. "Project for a Trip to China," which at first reading appears to be the sly Sontag game of setting up an obstacle course strewn with indirection, interruption, epigrammatic irrelevancy, and throwaway quotations from unidentified philosophers, reveals despite itself its emotional underpinning. The narrator's preparations for her trip have released long-suppressed memories of her father, who died long ago on a business trip to China, his grave unknown to this day. Amid the obfuscating clutter of random names, places, and allusions, the poignant threnody for the dead young father is all but drowned out. Yet when the improvised din lets up once in a while, the elegiac grief can faintly but unmistakably be heard.

In such mystifying narratives as "Old Complaints Revisited," "American Spirits," and "Dr. Jekyll," one must cope not only with the capricious rejection of substantive meaning, but with repetitious verbosity as well, and it becomes a pointless struggle. For example, in "Old Complaints," I could not begin to guess whether the "organization" that yet another "I" is eager but unable to leave is religious, political, sexual—or merely the parochial kibbutz of the Upper West Side intelligentsia. Is the sexual enslavement of the corn-fed wife and mother in "American Spirits" a cunning send-up of *L'Histoire d'O*—shotgun marriage of the Marquis de Sade and Betty Crocker—or is it a comic fable about the idea of pornography? Whatever the answers, these stories remain irredeemably dull. Even in the strongest piece in the book, "Debriefing," about the suicide of the narrator's disturbed friend Julia, whom "I" tries and fails to hold in life, Miss Sontag is reluctant to focus on the woman's perilous fragility, flits restlessly in and out of the lives of three black women and their errant daughters, and keeps veering off into random aphoristic observation that promises more than it delivers ("Everyone's in some kind of moral drag"). I know that the New York temper, fragmented and haphazard and cruelly intrusive, is for Miss Sontag both symptom and cause of her friend's surrender. But she becomes so hectically intrigued with style-as-randomness that she neglects the story's specific human provenance.

Indeed, *I, etcetera* is less a work of fictional imagination than a miscellany of indiscriminate hypotheses about fiction, organized around an omnivorously conscious "I" in perpetual motion and driven by a fierce craving for the new (or what has most recently been anointed in France as new), the abstract, the non-concrete; for any novelty that attests the triumph of the uncontested will, the "I" who, of course, has heard it all before. As Miss Sontag puts it in "Unguided Tour," wearily ticking off the boredom of travel, the banal spectacle of the past: "I know all the reactions I shall have. Know all the words that I am going to utter again." Outside "I" lies only the tedious familiarity of etcetera, the predictable flux of the commonplace which cannot feed the synoptic hunger of the jaded intellectual ego.

IN HER theoretical manifesto, "The Aesthetics of Silence" (1969), Miss Sontag declared that language "is the most impure, the most contaminated, the most exhausted of all the materials out of which art is made. . . . It's scarcely possible for the artist to write a word . . . that doesn't remind him of something already achieved. . . . Language is experienced not merely as something shared but as something corrupted, weighed down by historical accumulation." Defiantly rejecting the idea that art should be expressive, she argues that the artist, "so far as he is serious, . . . is continually tempted to sever the dialogue he has with an audience." Then why write?

Miss Sontag's motive for writing novels and stories is largely programmatic, based on the theoretical assumption that mimetic art is false, that it distorts reality by imposing the dead weight of "historical accumulation" and the corruptions of language on the actualities of consciousness and experience. She does not want her fiction to provide expressive perception that can be shared with readers; rather, she wants to challenge us by means of shock and the rude astonishments of the unexpected, to go even further than modern artists of the past who sought "to displease, provoke, or frustrate the audience." If boredom and distraction constitute the genuine reality, she should *be* boring and distracting, dream up situations that neither name nor interpret the apocalypse of contemporary existence but are in themselves boring or apocalyptic.

As theory, the aesthetic program drawn up in "The Aesthetics of Silence" is neither foolish nor as willfully extreme as she makes it sound. Language has indeed become exhausted and corrupt, not only within popular culture but, more seriously and dangerously, in the political arena of 20th-century history (as George Steiner has also argued). Miss Sontag's yearning for "a perceptual and cultural clean slate," despite the hortatory all-or-none form of her thinking, does make a serious case for some necessary, though often impracticable, shock of cultural recognition. What she says in "The Aesthetics of Silence" is not to be lightly dismissed—as theory. But as Goethe said, theory is gray when compared to life. When Miss Sontag proceeds to diagram her theories as fiction, the result is tedious because it is so doggedly cerebral and devoid of spontaneity. And she is unwilling to concede that there are contemporary writers who refuse to be defeated by the degeneration of lan-

* Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 246 pp., $8.95.

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guage and who can invest their work with unprecedented emotional and intellectual power because their imaginative resources are equal to the complex challenge of felt experience. Miss Sontag's contempt for "expressive" art betrays a distrust of emotion that in the end cripples her as a storyteller, leaving only the dead husk of theory severed from the one lifeline that literature cannot do without.

IN SHARP contrast to Susan Sontag's coldly axiomatic tales, those of John Cheever, in a huge new volume* that collects the stories he has written since the end of World War II, is awash in the rain of disenchantment and regret, rank with the smell of decay. Though Cheever tried, in his two Wapshot novels, to broaden his scope by endowing the poignancy of nostalgia with a local habitation and name —to portray a vanished New England blessed with social coherence, domestic stability, and moral grace —the quality of his yearning comes through with much greater power in his short stories. His temperament and talent are not at ease with the patient exploration of motives and extended personal histories, but they are flawlessly suited to the sentient moment, the rigorously foreshortened episode and isolated visual detail that suggest an unspoken fullness of feeling, a tacit sense of destiny, with highly concentrated intensity.

Peculiarly at home within the immediate present, Cheever is a master of the perfectly observed, evocative, unforgettably *fixed* moment: affluent Manhattan parents, dutiful and hung over, waiting with their children on an early-morning street corner for the private-school bus; the aging American boy hurdling sofas and tables at the end of a party that has gone on too long; the businessman model of propriety secretly baking Lady Baltimore cakes in the middle of the night to steady his nerves; the swimmer, in one of Cheever's most famous middle-class fables, making his way home from a Westchester party via a network of pools only to find his house locked, empty, forlorn. No other present-day writer can draw from the brackish smell of a rented summer house an entire life of failure and transgression, or detect and identify with Cheever's precision the ceremonial degeneracy of an Upper East Side cocktail party "where the company is never very numerous and the liquor is never very good—parties where, as you drink and talk, you feel a palpable lassitude overtaking any natural social ardor, as if the ties of family, society, school, and place that held the group together were dissolving like the ice in your drink."

In story after story, his abiding theme, however, is not so much the social and personal unraveling of his middle-class Wasp milieu as it is the private pain of disappointment, Cheever's disappointment, sometimes heartbreakingly lyrical and sometimes merely slick, with the way life has, alas, turned out. Bored and uncomfortable with analytic complexity, intimidated by the intellectual difficulties that tough scrutiny of experience and behavior might pose, Cheever prefers the soft, elegiac generalization that simulates thoughtful judgment but is really a lament, the fleeting intimation of lost hope and vanished happiness that stops short of being harsh and upsetting. Over and again he asks the same question—where did middle-class America go wrong?—but he cannot bring himself to face its disruptive implications, and he settles instead, as in "The Death of Justina," for a plangent eloquence that is brightly evasive:

> I stand, figuratively, with one wet foot on Plymouth Rock, looking with some delicacy, not into a formidable and challenging wilderness but onto a half-finished civilization embracing glass towers, oil derricks, suburban continents, and abandoned movie houses and wondering why, in this most prosperous, equitable, and accomplished world, . . . everyone should seem to be disappointed.

Cheever is a genteel puritan with a profound distaste for the disconcerting realities that lie beneath the melancholy beguiling surfaces of Fifth Avenue and suburbia. Yet there are moments—in artfully facile stories like "Torch Song" (about a woman who is an angel of death) and "The Five-Forty-Eight" (about a deranged secretary's ugly revenge on the boss who seduced and then fired her)—when he seems able to control his dismay at the proliferation of so much dishonor, infidelity, drunkenness, so much moral shabbiness, only through an artfully clever but unpersuasive sensationalism. Nor is he convincing when, to stave off the depression about to plunge him into the abyss, he resorts to incantatory affirmation, as though the sound of the words alone—"Valor! Love! Virtue! Compassion! Splendor! Kindness! Wisdom! Beauty!" —is sufficient to make them genuine talismans of promise and redemption, despite the admonitory lessons of experience; this is inspirational whistling in the dark that unwittingly mocks his exaltation.

Because Cheever's enduring strength lies in his lucid grasp of social detail, his hyper-alert eye for the telling gestures and revelations of speech, place, dress, manner, we become exaggeratedly aware of the constricted narrowness of the world he observes so closely. It is strangely untouched by history, politics, war, by the need for private accommodation to public events; it is unmoved by social change or conflicts of class and tradition. His rare working-class characters—cooks, doormen, janitors, baby-sitters—exist only as appendages of the middle class that depends on the functions they perform. And when Cheever writes about Italy, where he has spent enough time to absolve him of a tourist's superficiality, the alien scene remains an intractably foreign accident of place in which his expatriates live out their unchangeable American destinies, "tireless wanderers who go to bed night after night to dream of bacon-lettuce-and-tomato sandwiches."

CHEEVER'S America is so completely self-enclosed and detached from any sense of history that it seems airless and timeless. But it is in the work of Ann Beattie, another, much younger *New Yorker*

* *The Stories of John Cheever*, Knopf, 693 pp., $15.00.

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writer, that we find the dead end of his world, which was not as immune to cultural upheaval as he would have it appear. Miss Beattie tells us what happened to the children of Shady Hill and Proxmire Manor, those children that Cheever wrote about with exceptional tenderness because he was appalled by the insensitive carelessness and neglectful self-absorption of their parents. In time those children grew up, coming of age in the 60's, and Ann Beattie provides a bleak and chilling account of the way they live now. It is as though her stories spell out the legacy bequeathed to her generation by Cheever's, but in a voice seemingly as dry and devoid of moral indignation as Cheever's is ardent and enraged by parents who, as he wrote in "The Bus to St. James's," had become "bewildered and confused in principle, too selfish and too unlucky to abide by the forms that guarantee the permanence of a society, as their fathers and mothers had done. Instead, they put the burden of order onto their children and filled their days with specious rites and ceremonies."

The children's revenge was the giddy emancipations of the 60's. In Ann Beattie's stories of the 70's, the boys and girls whose young days were crammed with riding lessons and dancing lessons, with a satiety of precocious sophistication and expensive schools, have become a generation more irretrievably lost than Cheever could ever imagine their parents to be. This remarkable young writer chooses to write in a style that is deliberately as smooth, flat, and cold as a New England pond frozen February-thick (the one novel Beattie has published was, in fact, called *Chilly Scenes of Winter*). In the stories collected in her new book, *Secrets and Surprises*,* her youngish men and women wear a carapace of trauma as though it were a skin of nature. Nothing goes quite right for them, and their lives are alarmingly chaotic. They live on borrowed money, in borrowed houses, with borrowed lovers and dogs, drive borrowed cars. Living on borrowed time, they don't know it—or wouldn't care if they did—and they squander their days like popcorn, wandering in a daze of stoned irresolution from lover to lover and place to place. Lacking any coherent sense of purpose or responsibility, especially toward themselves—if they were aroused by any political idealism in the 60's, it has long since expired—they are infinitely pliable and suggestible, free to do whatever they like, go wherever they please, freedom has become their prison.

In the superb story "Colorado," Miss Beattie brilliantly conveys, with characteristic detachment, the pursuit of futility that has victimized a girl named Penelope: "She had run away from home when she was younger, and when she returned, things were only worse. She had flunked out of Bard and dropped out of Antioch and the University of Connecticut, and now she knew that all colleges were the same—there was no point in trying one after another. She had traded her Ford for a Toyota, and Toyotas were no better than Fords." When Penelope tells her lover that "I don't feel right about things," what she means is nothing specific or serious, just "the last five years." She quits an old lover, Dan, for a new lover, Robert, and "She didn't even go back to Dan's apartment for her clothes. She has been borrowing Robert's shirts and sweaters, and wears his pajama bottoms under his long winter coat when she goes to the laundromat so she can wash her one pair of jeans." When the couple impulsively leave New Haven for Colorado, Robert's normal apathy and confusion become so severe that he cannot remember what state he is in.

In the long story "Friends," a stoned and half-mad young mother wanders from Miami to New Hampshire, where before moving on she leaves her baby behind like a forgotten umbrella. Husbands leave their wives as casually as if they were just going around the corner for a six-pack; and a stranger heedlessly brought along to a weekend party turns out to be a murderous psychopath. There is as much drinking, malice, and domestic cruelty in Beattie's world as in Cheever's, but her burned-out relics of the 60's, unlike Cheever's guilty suburbanites, have lost whatever promptings of moral intelligence or constancy they may have once possessed. Rock and dope and musical-bed sex are the only rituals they recognize in their disheveled limbo, and Ann Beattie's austerely unadorned, uninflected, all but catatonic prose is the exact language of these lost souls. Not for her the radiant, romantic invocations of light and love and beauty that keep Cheever from going under, nor does one ever feel in her work the energetic presence of the author moving brightly through every Cheever story, the confident and cultivated voice unlike any other. In Miss Beattie's work the medium becomes the message; she slyly affects the uncritical neutrality of a tape recorder, never signaling us to notice how ingenious and canny a device of literary style this is.

But the flat severity of tone—perhaps because her barren characters, floundering and inconsolable, arouse so little compassion—can become self-defeating, an example of the imitative fallacy that conveys monotony only by becoming itself monotonous. In the familial line of descent from John Cheever to Ann Beattie, the vitality, warmth, and imaginative felicity of the older generation have perhaps been discarded too peremptorily, and what we now have is the cool and knowing unsentimentality, the merciless and unblinking gaze of the young, which absorbs a good deal less of life than is there for them to see.

* Random House, 307 pp., $8.95.

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Books in Review

Liberty & the State

A TIME FOR TRUTH. By WILLIAM E. SIMON. *Reader's Digest Press. 248 pp. $12.50.*

Reviewed by MARC F. PLATTNER

FORMER "energy czar" and Secretary of the Treasury William E. Simon has written a book that is part memoir and part manifesto. The memoir recounts how this financier-turned-Cabinet-officer came to conclude that government was the cause and not the cure of America's economic difficulties. The manifesto, rejecting the possibility of checking the transgressions of the state through conventional political strategies, calls for a long-range educational campaign to persuade the American people that their salvation lies in a return to strictly limited government and to free-enterprise economics.

As the portentous title of his book suggests, Mr. Simon regards himself as a voice crying out in the wilderness. Yet in the year and a half since this work was written, many of its themes have become commonplaces of public discussion: government in the United States has grown too big, too bureaucratic, too wasteful, and too expensive; taxes are too high; enormous budget deficits are fueling inflation; excessive and unreasonable regulation is stifling productivity; and more generally, our economic and social policies are inadvertently impairing the creation of the wealth that must ultimately finance them. The new public receptivity to such views no doubt has helped to gain *A Time for Truth* a rather unexpected place on the best-seller lists.

It is still too early to tell whether the change in public opinion symbolized by the passage of Proposition 13 and reflected in President Carter's announced intention to cut back on domestic spending will persist. Even if Carter's commitment to this course is genuine, and not based merely on a reading of the latest polls, there is always the chance that a successful Teddy Kennedy candidacy in 1980 could reverse the present trend. Nonetheless, given the evidence at hand, it seems likely that the emerging consensus against high taxes and growing government expenditure and regulation will dominate the political landscape for some time to come.

This prospect cannot help but influence one's reaction to Mr. Simon's book. Those who believe that the widespread resentment of "big government" and high taxes reflects the influence of the corporations or a new "politics of selfishness" will clearly find nothing but reprehensible falsehoods in *A Time for Truth*. Others who regard themselves as liberals but believe that government inefficiency and intrusiveness are genuine problems may find themselves reluctantly agreeing with many of Mr. Simon's criticisms. Yet precisely to the extent that opposition to "big government" looks as if it is attaining the status of conventional wisdom, it becomes increasingly necessary to distinguish among the differing policy implications that may be derived from this view. In this context, it is more important to identify the errors in Mr. Simon's own gospel than the truths that may be found in his indictment of recent public policy.

For while his critique draws most of its force from an attack on widely recognized abuses of overgrown government—the fiscal irresponsibility of New York City, absurd and contradictory federal regulations, poverty programs that wind up delivering very little benefit to the poor—Mr. Simon's proposed remedy calls for nothing less than the wholesale dismantling of the welfare state. In his view, the root of our present troubles lies in FDR and the New Deal, by whose agency "statism and collectivism were brought into this country by the back door." Similarly, he holds that the "mixed economy" by its very nature is a fatal and irrational attempt to combine capitalism and Communism that must lead to a drastic erosion of both wealth and liberty.

Mr. Simon does not deign to explain how the impressive economic growth of the United States in the quarter-century following World War II or the current superior performance of the West German economy under a social-democratic government is compatible with his analysis. But then his analysis ultimately is based not on empirical observation but on "moral principles." His first principle "sets individual liberty as the highest political value"; the second opposes "any intervention by the state into our lives, for by definition such intervention abridges liberty." From these two principles it follows that any state intervention in the economic sphere automatically leads to a loss of political liberty. Furthermore, when joined with the premise that "freedom is a precondition for economic creativity and wealth," they lead to the conclusion that a nation that tolerates any increase in state intervention in its economy "*must* grow poorer."

Mr. Simon's simple syllogisms are utterly unconvincing. It is one thing to argue that individual liberty cannot survive in a society that does not have a large and robust private sector. But unless one is merely playing with words, it is absurd to contend that political liberty (or economic growth) cannot be found in a welfare state or a mixed economy. To be fair to Mr. Simon, however, he does sometimes seem to be groping toward a slightly more sophisticated argument—namely, that once a nation begins heading down the road of

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War and Remembrance

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government intervention in the economy, a political and psychological dynamic takes hold that leads to ever greater encroachments on the private sector.

Yet it is not hard to see why he declines to rest his case for a return to totally unfettered "free enterprise" on this kind of argument. For if he were to assert that state intervention *inevitably* culminates in the demise of the private sector and of political liberty, this "truth," far from being timely, would come at least a half-century too late. In that case, a lament for freedom would have been more appropriate than the spirited call to arms that Mr. Simon has actually written.

Suppose, though, that the tendency of state intervention eventually to smother political freedom were held to be powerful but not irresistible, so that even at this late date it would remain possible to stem the tide. But then why would it be necessary to tear down the entire fabric of the welfare state? Why not instead seek to reform the welfare state, so that its genuine accomplishments may be preserved, the abuses that it has spawned may be minimized or eliminated, and the threat it poses to liberty may be held in check? It is Mr. Simon's inability or unwillingness to deal with this question that leads him to retreat into the misplaced moral principles of the libertarian creed, according to which state intervention is *by definition* a deplorable abridgement of liberty.

OUR greatest need at the present juncture is for careful and undogmatic thinking about how to shape the future of the welfare state—about what government can and cannot accomplish successfully, and about the costs and benefits, both economic and political, not only of specific government programs, but also of the growth of government as a whole. While *A Time for Truth* may have some value as an antidote to the delusions of those who have learned nothing from the experience of the last ten years, it provides very little useful guidance for grappling with the problems of the decade ahead.

The British in Palestine

EXILE AND RETURN. By MARTIN GILBERT. *Lippincott. 364 pp. $12.95.*

Reviewed by JOSEPH SHATTAN

IN A recent article on the fate of the British empire, Sir William Haley, the former editor of the (London) *Times,* paid tribute to "the understanding, the charity, and the magnanimity" shown by the British to their colonial charges. Although somewhat self-gratulatory, Sir William's praise was not entirely unwarranted: in many instances, the British *were* magnanimous. Yet as Winston Churchill's official biographer, Martin Gilbert, shows in this richly documented and engrossing study of Britain's administration of the Palestine Mandate, there were also times when British behavior was lacking not merely in charity or magnanimity, but in simple decency.

The legal basis for the British presence in Palestine was the League of Nations Mandate, issued in 1922, which, in its essentials, incorporated the Balfour Declaration of 1917. The immediate purpose of this Declaration, by which the British government pledged itself to facilitate "the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people," was to rally world Jewry, and especially Russian Jewry, to the cause of the Entente. But to British statesmen like David Lloyd George and Arthur James Balfour, the Declaration was also intended to right an ancient wrong, to remedy the unhappy condition of Jews in the world. As Balfour put it, "A great nation without a home is not right."

Interestingly enough, some initial Arab reaction to the proposed establishment of a Jewish national home in Palestine was favorable. As the Emir Feisal, head of the Arab delegation to the Paris Peace Conference of 1919, wrote to Felix Frankfurter, who was one of the American Zionist leaders, "We Arabs, especially the educated among us, look with deepest sympathy on the Zionist movement." But in the 1920's, leadership of the Palestinian Arab movement fell to Haj Amin, the Mufti of Jerusalem, an outspoken Nazi sympathizer who believed, or pretended to believe, that the Zionists had as their "ultimate aim" the reconstruction of Solomon's Temple on the ruins of the Muslim holy places in Jerusalem, and who inaugurated a reign of terror against those Arabs who felt that an accommodation with Zionism was possible.

During the 1920's and 1930's, the situation in Palestine steadily worsened until finally, in 1936, the House of Commons dispatched a royal commission under the chairmanship of Lord Peel to investigate the causes of unrest. In 1937, the commission published its report. Because it seemed impossible to devise a government which would be acceptable to both Jews and Arabs, the report recommended that Palestine be partitioned into separate Jewish and Arab states. The Jewish Agency accepted the report with reservations. The Arabs rejected it outright.

Meanwhile, within the British Foreign Office, influential people were urging that the Palestine problem be reconsidered "from the point of view of our relations with the surrounding Arab countries." The head of the Eastern Department of the Foreign Office, George Rendel, argued that Britain should scrap any plans for partition and instead impose permanent minority status on the Jews of Palestine. In an important memorandum circulated to the Cabinet on November 19, 1937, Rendel explained that the Middle East was "an organic whole" and that it was necessary to give the Arabs "some assurance that the Jews will neither become a majority in Palestine, nor be given any Palestinian territory in full sovereignty." Otherwise, he warned, Britain would incur "the permanent hostility of all the Arab and Muslim powers in the Middle East."

Gilbert shows how these two ideas, that the Arab world con-

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stituted an "organic whole" and that Anglo-Arab relations in general hinged on British behavior in Palestine, became the basis for Britain's Palestine policy during the last decade of the Mandate. "Palestine has become a pan-Arab question," the British Prime Minister, Neville Chamberlain, told his colleagues on the Cabinet Committee on Palestine, and any discussion of its future must include the "Arab princes" from neighboring states. To avoid antagonizing these "princes," Britain would have to renege on the pledge contained in the Balfour Declaration to facilitate the establishment of a Jewish national home in Palestine. "If we must offend one side," Chamberlain said, "let us offend the Jews." Thus, the Peel Commission's recommendations were rejected, and on May 17, 1939, the Chamberlain government issued a White Paper which limited to 100,000 the number of Jewish immigrants to be admitted into Palestine over a five-year period, after which all further immigration would be subject to Arab veto.

WITHIN four months of the issuance of the White Paper, World War II began. On September 18, Chaim Weizmann, who was president of the World Zionist Organization, called on the Colonial Secretary, Malcolm MacDonald, with an urgent request for "immediate permission" for 20,000 Polish Jewish children to enter Palestine. "The economic burden of supporting them," Weizmann stated in an accompanying letter, "will naturally fall upon the Jewish people, inside and outside Palestine. We pledge ourselves to provide for them. It therefore depends on your decision alone whether the lives of Jewish children shall be saved or not."

Weizmann's proposals were discussed that afternon in the Colonial Office. As the minutes recorded: "Mr. MacDonald said his own view had at first been that we should make some effort to meet this request, on humanitarian and other grounds. On reflection, however, he felt that it must be turned down." He acknowledged that "technically it might be possible for us to admit 20,000 Polish Jewish children to Palestine straightaway without going back on our pledge to the Arabs not to exceed the immigration figures laid down in the White Paper." Nevertheless, "the position in all the Middle Eastern countries was delicate, and he thought that to accept Dr. Weizmann's proposals might have serious consequences." Moreover, "however brutal it might sound, to remove 20,000 children from Poland at this moment would *pro tanto* simplify the German economic problem." Weizmann's request was therefore rejected.

As the tidal wave of anti-Semitism surged across Europe, many Jews sought refuge in Palestine. This provoked vigorous British countermeasures. Diplomatic representations were made to

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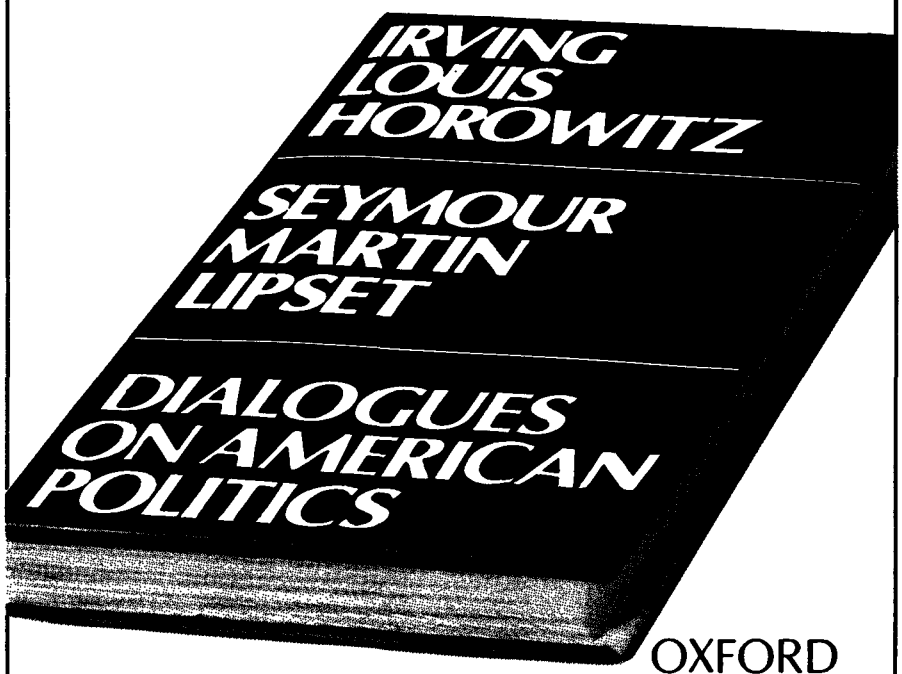

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Warsaw, Budapest, Bucharest, Athens, and Ankara urging that all exits to Palestine be sealed and that Jewish refugees be turned back to their countries of origin. Royal Navy ships were sent to intercept immigrant vessels, whose passengers were then transported to such remote places as the island of Mauritius in the Indian Ocean, and sometimes to even more distant colonies. Frequently, the results were tragic, as in the case of the *Struma,* a small boat which reached Istanbul in December 1941 carrying 769 Jewish refugees en route to Palestine. Two months later, the Turkish government, bowing to British pressure, ordered the ship out of Turkish waters and back into the Black Sea. There it was sunk, probably by a German submarine, and all but one of its passengers drowned.

British policy, however, as Gilbert documents it, remained unyielding. On March 5, 1942, the War Cabinet formally decided that "All practicable steps should be taken to discourage illegal immigration into Palestine." In December 1942, the Cabinet rejected, "on security grounds," an appeal from the Jewish Agency to permit 4,500 Bulgarian Jews to enter Palestine; an earlier request to permit 750 Iraqi Jews, survivors of anti-Jewish riots in Baghdad, to enter Palestine had been rejected by the High Commissioner for Palestine, Sir Harold Macmichael. Britain's fear of alienating Arab opinion was so extreme that on December 24, 1944, the new High Commissioner for Palestine, Lord Gort, advised the Foreign Office to ask the Soviet government, now occupying Rumania and Bulgaria, to close those countries' frontiers on the grounds that "Jewish migration from Southeast Europe is getting out of hand."

WITH the accession of the Labor party to power at the end of the war, many Zionists confidently expected that the White Paper, which Labor had opposed in 1939, would now be abrogated. They were wrong. Ernest Bevin, the new Foreign Secretary, believed in the "organic unity" not merely of the Arab Middle East, but of all of Islam. "Zionism is a matter of keen interest to 90 million Muhammadans in India," he declared in 1945, and it was obvious that those interests took precedence over the fate of the Holocaust survivors. To enforce the White Paper, the British government once again undertook to pressure foreign governments into preventing the departure of Jews to Palestine.

By 1947, the British had discovered yet another compelling reason to avoid offending the Arabs: oil. In a memorandum to the Cabinet marked "Top Secret," Ernest Bevin and Emanuel Shinwell, the Minister of Fuel and Power, predicted that the Arab states would soon become the world's principal oil producers, and warned against displeasing them "by appearing to encourage Jewish settlement [in Palestine] and to endorse the Jewish aspiration for a separate state." The British public, however, was demanding that the troops in Palestine, engaged in suppressing what had become a major uprising on the part of Palestinian Jewry, be brought home, and the Cabinet reluctantly acceded to its wishes. On February 14, 1947, Bevin announced that Britain would hand the Palestine problem over to the UN.

Gilbert barely discusses the final year of the British Mandate in Palestine, probably because at the time he was writing his documentary study the relevant government archives had not yet been opened. Still, he might have pointed out that whereas in most other cases the British arranged their departures in such a way as to insure a smooth and orderly transfer of power, in Palestine the Mandatory government refused to transfer the administrative apparatus to the incoming Jewish successor-regime. Instead, they preferred simply to dismantle it, so that when the British departed from Palestine in 1948, they left total chaos behind. Even so, despite their best efforts to scuttle the Zionist enterprise, the British gained neither the gratitude nor the respect of the Arab states.

PERHAPS the most curious fact to emerge from Gilbert's study is the readiness with which British statesmen, from 1937 onward, accepted the contention that the Arab world constituted an "organic whole." Far from being self-evident, this proposition flies in the face of observed political reality, yet it is hardly ever challenged to this day. There must be something peculiarly seductive in the image of the Arab world as a seamless web. How else explain the fact that so many American policy-makers remain intellectually affronted by the possibility of a "partial" settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict, and argue that the only worthwhile settlement must be a "comprehensive" one? Indeed, as Elie Kedourie has astutely observed: "A reader of the published collections of U.S. State Department papers relating to [the Middle East] . . . will be impressed by the extent to which American officials implicitly accepted the assumptions which underlay British policies from 1937." It is hard to think of a more damning indictment.

Poetry in America

THE POETRY ANTHOLOGY 1912-1977. Edited by DARYL HINE and JOSEPH PARISI. *Houghton Mifflin. 555 pp. $20.00.*

Reviewed by VERNON YOUNG

THE collection under review is a selective record from a single periodical, *Poetry,* covering sixty-five years under a succession of editors, beginning with its controversial founder, Harriet Monroe. While the book certainly contains a number of enduring poems by poets of large reputation, it is more notable, in its later pages, for good poems of the second order by poets who have not been widely celebrated. This is a respectable function for a periodical to exercise, since no one can discover every month, or every three months, a poet who disturbs the universe. The cause of poetry is sustained by anyone who makes a poem with passion or with elegance in a shape of grace. Many such poems are to

VERNON YOUNG, *a literary and film critic, contributed "Autumn Interiors" to our January issue.*

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be found in this anthology, but if we look for evidence of Daryl Hine's greater claim for the magazine whose career he is epitomizing —that *Poetry* has always been *au courant* with the dominant voices —we can safely say that the evidence is wanting.

The founding of *Poetry* by Harriet Monroe in Chicago in 1912 is rightly considered a milestone in America's literary culture. Today, it is easier than ever before to separate the myth of Harriet Monroe from the sober actuality of her position, thanks chiefly to the impeccable documentation of Ellen Williams in her recently published study, *Harriet Monroe and the Poetry Renaissance,** a chronicle by which Mr. Hine, in his introduction to the anthology, seems not to have been seriously impressed.

It becomes increasingly clear, from consulting not only this anthology but also Ellen Williams's report on the disputes that accompanied the magazine's inception, that the "revolutionary" role of Harriet Monroe in the history of modern letters was only fortuitously important in the diffusion of modernism. For modernism—among other things an extensive interrogation of the past in its relation to the baleful, expanding present—was an *international* movement, and its most expressive revelations in English poetry of the time were largely the doing of two Americans in exile, T. S. Eliot and Ezra Pound. Harriet Monroe was unarguably the good provider of a magazine for emergent American poets with no market and a scant public, but these native poets, in the main, addressed themselves to exclusively American, often regional, subjects, and were unconcerned with the more worldly dialogues, monologues, and manifestoes fathered by Eliot and Pound—the subject of which, broadly characterized, might be subsumed under Eliot's later rubric, "Tradition and the Individual Talent."

WITH no better preparation than Daryl Hine's introductory remarks, the reader who promptly skims the opening pages of this selection may quickly conclude that Miss Monroe had an extraordinarily catholic ear for the several accents of change in the methods and concerns of the new poetry. Within the first two dozen pages of poems published between 1912 and 1915, the reader will be confronted with the characteristic importunities of Ezra Pound, three definitive, often-quoted poems by W.B. Yeats, lyrics by D.H. Lawrence, an admirable early narrative by Robert Frost (the ruminative style already secured), contributions (slight but promising) from William Carlos Williams and Marianne Moore—and, as a first-act climax of the time, Eliot's "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock." After a more careful scrutiny, however, he will

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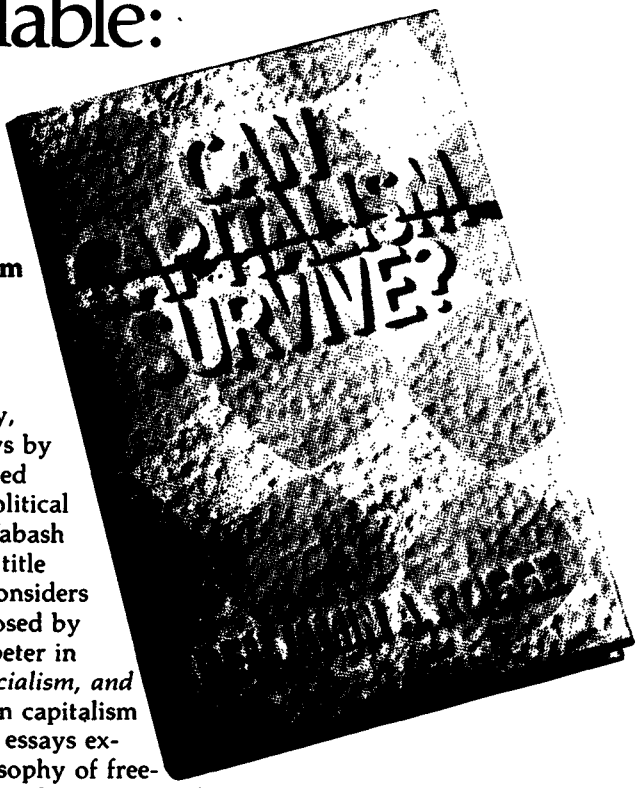

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be somewhat puzzled by the juxtaposition of these poems with Vachel Lindsay's "General Booth Enters Heaven," Carl Sandburg's hog-butchering "Chicago," threnodies by James Stephens and Sara Teasdale, and Rupert Brooke's less-then-disenchanted "England." He will note with astonishment that Pound's open-form, aggressively conversational idiom—"O helpless few in my country,/O remnant enslaved! . . . Take thought,/I have weathered the storm,/I have beaten out my exile. . . ."—is sandwiched between verse by Witter Bynner and Francis Thompson, where you get this sort of thing: "When from the blossoms of the noiseful day,/Unto the hive of sleep and hushèd gloom,/Throng the dim wingèd dreams, what dreams are they/That with the wildest honey. . . ."—precisely the kind of diction in which it will no longer be possible for any poet of transformed sensibility to express himself. He will observe, in perhaps the most comical contrast, Eliot's Prufrock, wondering "Do I dare? and, Do I dare?" immediately followed by burning questions of another order, "What has bent you, warped and twisted you,/Torn and crippled you?—What has embittered you, O lonely tree?" asked by Harriet Monroe herself in the opening lines of "The Pine at Timber-Line."

As on so many occasions between this period and 1936, when Miss Monroe died, her zeal in furthering modern poetry was inhibited by an uncertainty as to what did, indeed, constitute the modern, an uncertainty assisted by her genuine devotion to the intrinsically American which she not infrequently confused with either the provincial or the Brahmin, neither of which was prepared to recognize that an international earthquake had occurred in the mind and feelings of anyone who had perceived the radical dislocations of the outer world—"the dark encroachment of that old catastrophe"—dislocations which the most alert poets were striving to reconcile in a diversity of ways suggested by a host of European sources.

This disparity in experience or perception was itself the ground of Harriet Monroe's ambivalent association with her European editor—more often, contender—the irascible Ezra. Pound was so belligerently intent upon setting Harriet Monroe right about who was and who was not eligible for inclusion in the new order as to overlook the fact that if it had not been for her initiative in launching the magazine and maintaining its economy by a consistent talent for fund-raising, he would have had no American outlet for himself and his lordly few during the crucial years when *Poetry* was printing him into fame. Indeed, the very character of *Poetry* at that time was formed by a collision of interests: the incessant badgering of Ezra Pound and the enduring patience (and but partial comprehension) of Miss Monroe. Pound's gratitude for Harriet Monroe's substantial achievement was forever underlined by his scorn for her shortcomings. If we can look back without anger at Pound's undying testiness, there is little question that his summing up of the vexed situation, written in 1930, was probably accurate:

> Miss Monroe never pretended to adopt either a contemporary, European, or international criterion. Certain principles that Europe had accepted for eighty years never penetrated her sanctum. It is possible that the recognition of these ideas would have prematurely extinguished her magazine. On the other hand, she may never have grasped these ideas.

And on the specific subject of who was responsible for what in *Poetry*, he declared:

> She has printed on her own motion Mr. Lindsay's "General Booth." She has printed after six months argument with me, Mr. Frost. She has printed (after Marion Reedy had with great difficulty persuaded him to write *Spoon River*) some poems by Edgar Lee Masters. She printed after six months' argument with me, Mr. Eliot's "Prufrock." She printed me a year or so after Mr. Mencken had done so. . . . She also mutilated my "Homage to Sextus Propertius," at a time when I had to take what I could get. . . .

These reproaches (quoted from Ellen Williams's book), which there is no reason to dispute, are serious qualifications of the astute judgment which hearsay has often attributed to Harriet Monroe. At the same time, we need to recall that Pound was no paragon of tolerance. He published poets associated with his own "movement" and dismissed William Carlos Williams as "a suburban physician." He ignored the appearances of Wallace Stevens in *Poetry*, consistently from 1914 to 1921. He dismissed Yeats in 1920—possibly, Miss Williams has inferred, because Yeats had returned to Ireland for his subject. And it was Eliot, rather than Pound, who first understood the merit of Marianne Moore, in 1918.

By 1920 the breach between the two Americans was irrevocable and the appearance of Schofield Thayer's *The Dial* effectually modified the exclusive influence of *Poetry* and ended part of an era. Thayer decisively scooped Miss Monroe in his first dazzling year, heading his first issue with poems by E.E. Cummings and in later numbers picking up Marianne Moore, a half-dozen poems of Williams, another group of six from Pound's "Mauberly," and a splendid selection from Yeats which included "The Second Coming." As for Miss Monroe, she raised her subscription rates and weathered the change, apparently justifying her existence to progressive readers by the faithful presence of Wallace Stevens (whose poetry she had not in fact always sponsored with complete confidence).

From 1922 on, the record, conspicuous in the abridged form imposed by the selections in this anthology, reveals how radically *Poetry* fell off from anything like primary leadership, even though it published meritorious work. Hart Crane shows up in 1926 with "At Melville's Tomb," but Miss Monroe's advocacy of him was reluctant. By 1928, she had reverted strongly to a relatively Populist ethos, repudiating firmly not only Pound and Crane but also Yvor

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Winters, Allen Tate, and William Carlos Williams (!) for their "folded-in, aristocratic conception of the poet."

SINCE Mr. Hine acknowledges that the 30's and 40's were "a dark and vexed period" for *Poetry*, followed by insecure recovery in the 50's and 60's, there is little justification for his later insistence that *Poetry* "has reflected the temper of each period as infallibly as the taste of each successive editor." Editorial taste and prevailing temper have seldom been harmoniously allied in *Poetry*. Assuming that the interest of the reader in this anthology is primarily one of historical retrospect, I think he would find slight implications of, for instance, the international impact of Auden, Spender, and C. Day Lewis in the heyday of their exuberant Marxism; he would receive no distinct impression of the diversified pleasure with which we read the sardonic poems of Randall Jarrell, the fastidious poems of Richard Wilbur, and the apocalyptic outcries of Robert Lowell shortly after World War II, or of the sustained pitch and influence of Auden, then resident in the U.S., and the exploding fervor of Dylan Thomas—even though one of his best is here, "Poem in October." No great daring is required to publish a single poem by a new voice, but it takes commitment for an editor to stand behind a poet in whose work he sees the larger unity of theme which usually denotes the major figure.

That "*Poetry* has continued to discover new poets who have in time become the dominant talents of their generation" is simply not self-evident. The *Hudson Review*, by no means exclusively devoted to poetry, has far greater justification for such a claim over the last thirty years. Among its "firsts" are A. R. Ammons, William Stafford, and Louis Simpson, and if Laurence Lieberman, James Dickey, William Dickey, Peter Davison, Anthony Hecht, David Wagoner, and the Englishmen, Charles Tomlinson and Peter Redgrove, were not literally first printed there, it was in those pages that most readers fully encountered them, because in each case they were given generous and repeated presentation. None of these poets—and they are among the best of our time—has been given worthy attention in the pages of *Poetry*.

"Many fine poems by authors not destined to what, prematurely, we call immortality, also appeared here . . . and it is these we have been most zealous to reprint . . . in an effort to provide a background to the giant reputations that grew in this nursery." I have already conceded that the anthology belongs on a reader's shelf for its "many fine poems"; yet one suspects that Mr. Hine's assurance is a rationalization for *Poetry*'s failure to nurse any giant reputation since the defection of Ezra Pound and the death of its founder.

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Tales of Mao's China

THE EXECUTION OF MAYOR YIN AND OTHER STORIES FROM THE GREAT PROLETARIAN CULTURAL REVOLUTION. By CHEN JO-HSI. Translated by NANCY ING and HOWARD GOLDBLATT. Introduction by SIMON LEYS. *Indiana University Press. 220 pp. $8.95.*

Reviewed by CHARLES HORNER

THE establishment of diplomatic relations between the United States and China is supposed to yield various strategic and economic returns. However that may work out, one wonders whether "normalization" will yield new insight into Chinese realities. For Americans are deeply ignorant not only of China's real political workings, but even more of its cultural and intellectual life.

Consider a single example. Western readers are by now thoroughly familiar with the "dissident" literature of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. But few have seemed to notice the absence of a Chinese counterpart. Indeed, it is only recently that we have become even remotely aware that dissident literature does exist in China. In December 1977, Fox Butterfield of the New York *Times* reported on accounts that had reached the West of an "underground" Chinese literature, part escapism, part submerged political protest. Some of it was apparently wholly oral, passed by word of mouth after the fashion of traditional storytellers; some consisted of unpublished literary material, anonymously written and circulated.

A year later, accounts of disaffection became far more substantial, with Teng Hsiao-ping and his "moderate" colleagues apparently in firm control. Thus, John Fraser of the Toronto *Globe and Mail* could report from Peking on "the appearance of a dramatic wall poster attacking [China's] record on human rights. . . . The poster was addressed to President Carter. . . . The authors criticized the President for ignoring the issue of [human rights] in China." Yet for all the widely reported ferment of late 1978, the dissenters are anonymous still. All the more intriguing, then, are written works of "dissent" that we can associate with a known author, such as the collection under review.

Chen Jo-hsi is a forty-year-old native of Taiwan. After graduation from the National Taiwan University in 1961, she studied in the United States, first at Mount Holyoke, then at Johns Hopkins, where she married a Chinese graduate student in physics. In 1966, the two decided to live in China and arrived there as the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution was spreading throughout the country. They spent seven years in the People's Republic; in the thaw that followed the Nixon visit, they were allowed to resettle in Hong Kong. They now live in Canada. The eight stories in the *Mayor Yin* collection were written in Chinese between November 1974 and August 1976.

The stories are thus not, properly speaking, products of a literary underground, although they certainly are dissident literature. In each story, the protagonists are victims, physical or psychological, of the "system." Mayor Yin, the hero of the title story, is an earnest and sincere official whose political murder is brought about by a young Red Guard who displays fanaticism and opportunism in equal measure. In other stories, a devoted female cadre member is hounded to suicide; the residents of a communal dormitory are mobilized to trap a suspected adulteress; a four-year-old child commits a serious "political error"; a simple worker purchases a fish to cheer up his sick wife, only to be told that he must return it for possible display to a group of foreign visitors.

The pattern is clear. Victims of the Cultural Revolution, as described by Miss Chen, are "good Communists" who have been forced to live beneath the level of their attainments. But like Miss Chen and her husband—who returned to China in a moment of genuine patriotic enthusiasm—they are *naifs*. As their situations unfold, and as we follow the surreal twists and turns of the political line, we are struck by the allegiance which these people, despite everything that has befallen them, still retain to the larger purposes of the regime. Miss Chen's characters may appear resigned, disappointed, or ironic, but they are never bitterly cynical or overtly hostile to the regime. None of them seems able to imagine an alternative arrangement; instead, they cope—as the Chinese have coped for centuries—with all manner of abrupt shifts in personal fortune.

PRECISELY because Miss Chen's accounts ring so true, one is puzzled by the tolerance of the educated Chinese she writes about. They have been thoroughly exposed to the West—many are even bilingual—yet even as they suffer from the government's methods they continue to take its declared aims at face value. Miss Chen, moreover, appears to concur in their attitude. As one reads, for example, of the seeming contentment of a former university teacher who accepts with more than good grace his current occupation—making kerosene stoves out of old tin cans—one waits for the author to provide some clue as to the meaning of such a response to what she assures us is social and political madness. But none is really forthcoming. The stories remain vignettes—evocative, brilliant, powerful, to be sure, but less than deep explorations of the human situation. Is this the much-vaunted Chinese stoicism in the face of adversity? Or is it the reluctance of an obviously skillful and courageous writer to follow things wherever they might lead?

And yet these stories do remain instructive for what they reveal, perhaps unwittingly, of the dilemmas facing the Chinese intelligentsia. The best piece in the collection, "Keng Erh in Peking," is the tale of a forty-nine-year-old American-educated scientist working at one of Peking's prestigious research institutions, who has twice, on pointless political grounds, been refused permission to marry. He

CHARLES HORNER *is senior legislative assistant to Senator Daniel P. Moynihan. Mr. Horner contributed "Redistributing Technology" to our January issue.*

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dines with an old friend from his student days who had opted for a career in the United States rather than for a return to China. Keng Erh is open enough in sharing his personal difficulties with his friend, but reticent when it comes to the unsettled state of the Chinese scientific community. "In the final analysis, I am a Chinese, he told himself: how I feel is my own business, but defending the national image is a moral obligation." It would seem, then, that whatever else the Maoist order destroyed in Chinese life —honest personal relations, the rule of law, a proper sense of justice, cultural creativity, individual expassion—it did not destroy that fundamental sense of Chinese nationalism. Indeed, by restoring China to the status of a world power, it was successful in reinforcing it.

Miss Chen went to China as a patriot; her cosmopolitan background made life in such a sterile and banal country personally unendurable, and so she left. Yet she remains a patriot, uncomfortable with her own cosmopolitanism; it is almost as if she regrets that her exposure to things Western has made her somehow unsuited for a satisfying life with countrymen engaged in a large common enterprise. Her tales, however, contain forceful criticism of Mao's China. The claims made for them in the introduction by the Belgian Sinologist, Simon Leys (author of *Chinese Shadows*), are perhaps too large, but the stories do affirm his essential point: "In the empire of lies, the humblest truth is revolutionary."

The Sand Phenomenon

THE DOUBLE LIFE OF GEORGE SAND, WOMAN AND WRITER. By RENEE WINEGARTEN. *Basic Books. 339 pp. $15.00.*

Reviewed by JOHN WEIGHTMAN

ANOTHER book on George Sand? This famous lady, who survives in popular mythology because she wore trousers and was tempestuously involved with Alfred de Musset and Frédéric Chopin, has never lacked commentators. During the last decade alone, at least ten new studies on her have appeared in French and English, including Curtis Cate's very full and sympathetic biography and Anthony West's vitriolic analysis in *Mortal Wounds* (both published in 1975). Before that, in 1972, André Maurois had brought out *Lélia*, perhaps the liveliest and most authoritative account written by a contemporary Frenchman. Mrs. Winegarten lists all the relevant works conscientiously in her bibliography, without explaining in so many words why she felt another study to be necessary. It is true that practically all the biographers and critics who have dealt with Sand have been men—some oc-

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casionally casting themselves in the role of supplementary, posthumous lovers, and others seeking vengeance on behalf of Musset and Chopin—so there may be room for a female point of view, if one believes in such a thing.

Perhaps this is what Mrs. Winegarten intends to supply, since she says in her short prologue:

> Throughout her long life, in diaries and memoirs, in letters, novels, plays, and essays, she [Sand] struggled to understand herself as a woman and a human being. It was not easy, and she did not always succeed. But she tried, and she was perhaps the first woman to make the attempt with such enduring consistency and on such a scale.

In the light of this statement, one might have expected Mrs. Winegarten to produce a fairly feminist study, with rather different emphases from those to be found in Curtis Cate and André Maurois. But in fact, as far as I can see, she puts forward no definably new thesis, and limits herself to a clear and cool retelling of the well-known story, without entering into any kind of debate with her predecessors, and in particular without directly challenging Anthony West's contention that Sand was unbalanced through having had a disturbed childhood, and therefore could not help messing up the lives of others. At most, she accepts Sand's own view that, because of her father's death when she was only four, she kept looking in vain for a father-figure in later life. In recounting the various episodes in connection with which it is habitual to take sides for or against Sand, Mrs. Winegarten remains on the whole impartial, even disappointingly so, because a biography is more vivid if the writer, while scrupulously weighing the evidence, manages to convey the passionate tension between opposite points of view.

My feeling, as I have progressed through the book, has been that Mrs. Winegarten is slightly biased in Sand's favor during the first two-thirds, seeing her as a heroic figure who, in spite of her mistakes, was battling worthily for self-realization, and then in the last third, becomes rather more critical as the list of Sand's lovers grows even longer and the young romantic settles down into the dominant matriarch, *la bonne dame de Nohant*, who was generous enough in many ways, but also not above a certain amount of unconscious or semiconscious prevarication or even dishonesty. When, at this stage, Sand writes to a correspondent: "If I had to begin my life over again, I should remain chaste," Mrs. Winegarten tartly remarks: "This was, indeed, the one role left untried."

Then the epilogue tries to arrive at a judicious balance by pointing out, on the one hand, that Sand's literary reputation has perhaps been unfairly damaged by the fact that she wrote too much in order to support her matriarchal way of life and, on the other, that her

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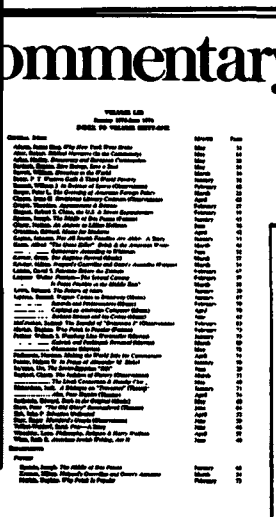

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position in the history of female liberation is secure:

> She broke the feminine stereotype, tried all the roles, expanded feminine possibilities. She opened windows and let free air into the stuffy drawing-rooms and studies. . . . Henry James could aptly observe that "Madame Sand's abiding value will probably be in her having given her sex, for its new evolution and transformation, the real standard and measure of change . . . women are turned more and more to looking at life as men look at it and to getting from it what men get." That was no small aim, and it cannot be said, even now, to have become commonplace.

AFTER looking at some of the evidence again, while reading Mrs. Winegarten's book, I wonder if this rather prosaic balancing of the pros and cons really does justice to the peculiarities of the Sand phenomenon. Aurore Dudevant, who appropriated the first half of the name of one of her lovers, Jules Sandeau, to give herself a masculine identity, was not simply a gifted woman of exceptional courage, fighting for the liberation of the ordinary female. She was what the French call *une maîtresse femme,* and a romantic one at that, as explosively energetic and masculine in some respects as Florence Nightingale, with whom she can be usefully compared and contrasted. Her sexual drive, which she was puzzled by herself, since she often remarks in her correspondence how little we understand ourselves, seems to have been strongly ambiguous, even if her passionate attachment to the actress Marie Dorval was not physically consummated.

Though we may have doubts about Anthony West's argument to the effect that she was warped by the strains of her childhood—during the commotion of the revolution and the Napoleonic period, thousands of children were subjected to similar estrangements, social tensions, and psychological buffeting without turning into George Sands—there must have been something unusual about her, since she burned up men with remarkable rapidity, and usually left them depressed and resentful, as if their virility had been blunted. There is perhaps something deeply symbolic about the fact that her husband, Casimir Dudevant, whose personality is so difficult to grasp since she tends to present him alternately as a weakling and a tyrant, wrote a letter to Napoleon III soliciting the Legion of Honor partly on the grounds that he had been so often cuckolded in the service of French literature. In other words, it is hardly enough to say that Sand boldly assumed the right to behave like a man; she frequently behaved like an overpowering, unscrupulous man. There must have been a very large dose of personal egotism in her make-up, and while it is true that the cause of female emancipation can perhaps only be developed in the first instance by female chauvinists, female chauvinism is inherently no better than male chauvinism.

Similarly, I doubt very much whether the quality of her writing was seriously affected by the circumstance that she wrote an immense amount and, especially in her later years, for the express purpose of earning money. Writing, for her, was obviously a kind of physiological-cum-psychological function or compulsion and, to do her justice, she never made high claims for her works. Mrs. Winegarten quotes her as saying that her output would be forgotten in fifty years' time; another of her remarks is that she could never remember the contents of any of her novels once she had completed it.

WHAT is extraordinary is that she was such a "writing animal," *une vache à écrire,* as Baudelaire unkindly said. She was as prolific as Balzac, and everyone was astonished by her ability to compose twenty pages at a stretch in all circumstances, sometimes during the day, sometimes at night. But the question is: what is the nature and quality of her "best" novels? Why are they no longer read, although they had a great vogue in their day throughout Europe, and particularly in Victorian England,

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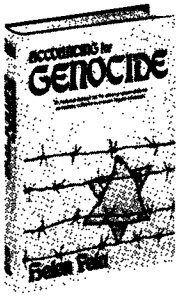

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as is demonstrated in Patricia Thompson's book, *George Sand and the Victorians* (1977)?

Mrs. Winegarten is polite about the three most famous novels, *Indiana, Lélia,* and *Consuélo,* and André Maurois, surprisingly, expresses surprise that they should be so neglected by the modern public. But, to be honest, I think they can now be read only through a sense of scholarly duty, or by someone with a strong addiction to romantic cliché. Admittedly, Sand's style is easy and flowing; she is an instinctive storyteller and, when she chooses, an accomplished rhetorician, but her themes are simple and moralizing and, above all, she puts into almost every book some central female character who is a narcissistic idealization of herself. True, there was enough content in the three books just mentioned to excite her contemporary audience—*Indiana* deals with a wife's revolt against her husband; *Lélia* raises the issue of female sexuality; and *Consuélo* is to some extent a transposition of the artistic rivalries of the time—but, to my mind, all three are marred by the same insidious, self-deceiving smugness that is evident in *Elle et Lui,* her *roman à clef* about her relationship with Musset.

She can be intelligent on the subject of other people, and her portrait of Musset in that book may be substantially true; but the story is dominated and ruined by an enormous projection of herself as an admirable lady with all the virtues, clearly very different from the real George Sand who transferred her interest very quickly from Musset to his handsome young Italian doctor, Pagello, and then quickly got rid of Pagello once his novelty had worn off. Little wonder that Musset's brother Paul, who knew many of the facts suavely omitted by Sand, should have composed a counter-blast under the title *Lui et Elle.*

Of course, novels need not be, and indeed cannot be, literally true to lived reality. But if a work of fiction is to have lasting validity, the imaginative transposition of reality must ring true in all its parts. For some reason, Sand remained too involved with her own ego ever to insure this. Even in her autobiography, *Histoire de ma vie,* which is probably her best literary achievement, she is frequently dishonest through omission or through quietly tinkering with the texts she presents as evidence. Sadly, one has to conclude that she was a great phenomenon without being a truly great writer.

Soviet Terror

KOLYMA: THE ARCTIC DEATH CAMPS. By ROBERT CONQUEST. *Viking. 254 pp. $10.95.*

THE PUNISHED PEOPLES: THE DEPORTATION AND FATE OF SOVIET MINORITIES AT THE END OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR. By ALEKSANDR M. NEKRICH. Translated by GEORGE SANDERS. *Norton. 236 pp. $10.95.*

THE GULAG ARCHIPELAGO, 1918-1956. Volume III. By ALEKSANDR I. SOLZHENITSYN. Translated by HARRY WILLETS. *Harper & Row. 558 pp. $16.95.*

Reviewed by ABRAHAM BRUMBERG

OF THE three books under review, the first deals with one particularly horrible section of what Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn has so indelibly stamped with the title "Gulag [acronym for Chief Administration of Corrective Labor Camps] Archipelago." The second relates a particularly odious chapter in the history of the Archipelago. And the third constitutes the final installment of Solzhenitsyn's compendious guide to all the sections, all the islands, and all the historic chapters of this monstrous institution.

Robert Conquest is an English poet, writer, scholar, and—above all—indefatigable student of the Soviet Union. In *Kolyma* he set himself the task of reconstructing, on the basis of a number of first-hand reports as well as of several secondary sources, the first complete picture of that huge and most sinister of all the penal-camp complexes in the Soviet Union, located in the country's extreme northeastern region. To this land of almost perpetual frost (60° below zero temperatures are the norm during the winter months) millions of wretched Soviet prisoners—men and women, "politicals" and "*urkas*" (criminals)—were sent from the early 1930's until the late 1950's to mine gold, to hack wood—and to die. Indeed, the death toll in Kolyma's 125 or so camps was probably the highest of all the "islands" of the Archipelago—a total of more than three million (the figure is an extrapolation from official statistics). This alone leads Conquest (along with so reliable a witness as the historian Roy Medvedev) to claim that Kolyma was essentially no better or worse than Auschwitz, that its principal aim, after a while, was not to get the most work out of its prisoners, but to kill them.

The comparison may perhaps be a bit strained, if one bears in mind that the gas ovens in Auschwitz, at the height of their activity, killed thousands daily, disposing of two million human beings in a matter of only three years. But comparisons may be as odious as they are irrelevant. The overwhelming evidence adduced by Conquest certainly testifies to the most savage form of cruelty and disregard for human lives: on the week-long sea voyage from Vladivostok to Magadan (the transit camp from which the prisoners were shipped inland), thousands of men and women were thrown into cavernous dungeons, given meager rations of bread and water, and subjected to bestial treatment by half-crazed murderers and rapists. In the camps themselves they were kept working twelve, fourteen, and sixteen hours a day, executed on the spot for minor infractions, kept on starvation diets, and given clothing which in far less severe climates would have been scarcely adequate. All these details are related by the author with almost clinical detachment, with numerous references to his sources, and frequently with passages taken from the various eyewitness accounts which are far more compelling than any generalizations or statistical compilations.

At only one point does the au-

ABRAHAM BRUMBERG *has written widely on Soviet affairs.*

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thor depart from his dispassionate stance—and that is when he relates the short visit paid to Magadan in 1944 by Vice President Henry Wallace and a group of advisers headed by Professor Owen Lattimore. Henry Wallace, of course, was the epitome of the American innocent abroad, and Lattimore a sturdy Soviet apologist. The preparations staged for Wallace's visit would have brought a blush to the cheeks of Count Potemkin: wooden watchtowers were pulled down; shops were suddenly filled with goods never seen before (nor, within several hours of the departure of the American party, after); prisoners were kept indoors; and well-fed NKVD guards were substituted for miners and swineherds whom the Americans were brought to inspect. To his credit, as Conquest notes, Wallace eventually realized that he had been had, and apologized for his naiveté. Since Owen Lattimore was never naive, he has had nothing to apologize for to this day.

OF ALL the atrocities committed by Stalin, the wholesale deportation of six national minorities from their homes in the Crimea and the Caucasus to Central Asia, Siberia, and Kazakhstan in 1943-44 is one that the West seems to be least aware of. Not that there was anything unique about this exercise in mass retribution (the "culprits," more than a million men, women, and children, were all accused of collaborating with the German invaders); nor has there been a dearth of published information about it. The principle of collective guilt and collective punishment was introduced by Lenin in 1918 and flourished indiscriminately under his successor: relatives, including children, of arrested "enemies of the people," were themselves arrested and exiled to remote parts of the country; philatelists were suspected of insidious ties with the outside world and imprisoned *en bloc*; millions of peasants were branded as *kulaks*, left to starve, or deported to Siberia and Central Asia. As for ethnic groups, already in the early 1930's thousands of Chinese and Koreans were accused of being Japanese agents and removed from the central regions of Russia, and in 1939-41 Balts, Ukrainians, and other minorities that inhabited the newly annexed territories were sent east to make room for the more reliable Russian colonizers. The 1943-44 deportations were the subject of an excellent book by Robert Conquest, published in 1960 (*The Soviet Deportation of Nationalities*, St. Martin's). Yet for some reason this particular case of vengeful brutality has never impressed itself on Western consciousness. The publication of Aleksandr Nekrich's book, therefore, is both timely and necessary.

A Soviet historian, Nekrich caused a furor in 1965 with the publication of his *June 22, 1941*, which mercilessly exposed Russia's unpreparedness for the German attack, and the central role played in it by Stalin. The book was written during the comparatively liberal reign of Nikita Khrushchev. A year after its publication, it was discovered to be full of "ideological errors," and in 1967 the author, having refused to acknowledge them, was expelled from the party and his book withdrawn from circulation. He emigrated to the West in 1976.

Who were the "traitors" uprooted by Stalin in 1943-44? There were the Chechen and Inguishi, both small Muslim peoples of the Northern Caucasus, fiercely nationalistic and religious at the same time; the Karachi and Balkars, also Muslims, who inhabited the Caucasus; the Mongol and Buddhist Kalmyks, numbering a little more than 134,000 on the eve of World War II; and the approximately 300,000 Crimean Tatars. (A good part of the 400,000 Volga Germans had already been expelled and deported in the summer of 1941, as the Germans were advancing on all fronts.) Only a small minority of these people, as Nekrich convincingly demonstrates, had ever made common cause with the Nazis. Many fought in partisan units, and thousands of them were decorated for valor. Yet rumors about the wholesale collaboration

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of, say, the Crimean Tatars with the Nazi occupation forces, all of them highly exaggerated and never verified, constituted all the "proof" that the central authorities in Moscow, who were anyway pathologically suspicious of non-Russians, needed to set the deportation process into motion.

It was a mind-boggling operation, and although it was partially described in Conquest's 1960 book, Nekrich is now able to fill it out, since, among other sources, he has used Soviet dissertations, many of them written by the sons and daughters of the deportees. He provides shattering details: the sudden descent of NKVD troops on unsuspecting villages; the summary reading of the relevant decree, and the order to get ready within five or ten minutes; the forcible herding of thousands of people into cattle trains and then the nightmarish journey to an unknown destination, which sometimes lasted as long as three or four weeks. The conditions in the "special settlements" were no better. Many of the arrivals found themselves unable to adjust to the alien climate, and the lack of elementary necessities—shelter, food, and health care—caused thousands more casualties in the years to come. The sheer vindictiveness of this process is underlined by the fact that all these deportations took place *after* the Soviet troops had reconquered the relevant territories—that is, when there was no military reason for it.

Characteristically, it was not until June 1946, two-to-three years after the fact, that the deportation decree was made public. And it was not until ten years later that Khrushchev, during his not so secret "secret speech" on Stalin, denounced the "monstrous acts whose initiator was Stalin and which are crude violations of the basic Leninist principles of the nationality policy of the Soviet state." In 1957, most of the nationalities were rehabilitated and allowed to return to their original domiciles. In 1964, the Volga Germans were officially cleared of the charges against them, but were not permitted to reestablish their autonomous republic—an act which, as Nekrich notes, was directly responsible for the emergence of the massive attempts of Soviet Germans, many of whose ancestors settled in Russia more than 150 years ago, to emigrate to Germany. In September 1967, the accusations against the Tatars were also formally withdrawn, but their former designation as "Crimean Tatars" was abandoned in favor of the more generic "Tatars," and so was their right to return to their homeland. As in the case of the Volga Germans, this affirmation of the "Leninist principle of the nationality policy of the Soviet state" has given rise to a powerful "national-liberation" movement of Crimean Tatars, still very much alive today.

WHICH brings us, finally, to Solzhenitsyn—the most eloquent witness of Stalinist barbarism, at once its victim, chronicler, and interpreter. Having, in the first two volumes, traced the origins and history of this vast enterprise of terror, having depicted the conditions in labor camps, the behavior of the authorities, guards, and inmates, having provided ghastly details about tortures and executions, the fate of children, the treatment of women, the wholesale persecution of millions of people, most of whom would not have dared to raise a hand against the state—having, that is, portrayed the degradation of the human spirit, he now turns to its finest moments. The dominant motif of Volume III is resistance: individual acts of defiance, hunger strikes, work stoppages, attempts (invariably foredoomed to failure) to escape from or organize insurrections within the camps. Drawing on his own experiences and observations, as well as on material obtained from hundreds of informants (many of them former guards), he clearly demonstrates that even the most refined forms of punishment and even the most elaborate attempts to deprive the *zeks* (convicts) of any dignity and hope did not prevent many of them from fighting back, from insisting on their rights (such as they were), or from exacting a drop of retribution or humiliation from those whose business it was to crush and humiliate them.

It may well be that Solzhenitsyn turned to this subject not merely for the sake of historical truth, but also as a catharsis—or act of atonement. After all, had he not come close to condemning the whole Soviet population for accepting slavery, indeed for helping to bring it about? "We didn't love freedom enough . . . ," he wrote in Volume I. "We spent ourselves in one unrestrained outburst in 1917 and then we hurried to *submit*. We submitted with *pleasure*. . . . We purely and simply *deserved* everything that happened afterward." Now, surely Solzhenitsyn knows that this statement—like so many other sweeping assertions to which he is prone—has the force neither of history nor of logic behind it. Indeed, throughout the first two volumes his exquisite gift of observation, his uncanny understanding of the behavior of human beings in the grip of paralyzing fear, led him to describe the process of "submission" without qualification (not one of the convicts accepted "with pleasure" the putrid food, the long working hours, or the savage beatings) and without censure. And in this volume, too, allowance is made for those (that is, the majority) who did not resist, whose strength was sapped as much by years of unspeakable suffering as by the fact that the world outside the camps was hostile to them and ready to collaborate with their tormentors.

"The surprising thing," says Solzhenitsyn, "is not that mutinies and risings did not occur in the camps, but that in spite of everything they *did*." His remarkable accounts fully bear him out. Several chapters are devoted to convicts who managed, by sheer perseverance and cunning, to break out and wander off, sometimes for only a day, sometimes for several weeks. Subsisting on little more than some stagnant water or a chicken stolen from a peasant household, hiding out during the day and moving stealthily during the night, the escaped prisoners would inevitably be caught, either shot on the spot (under the pretext of "trying to escape") or brought back to the camp, thrown into the punishment cell, and then sentenced to another ten or even twenty-five years; all

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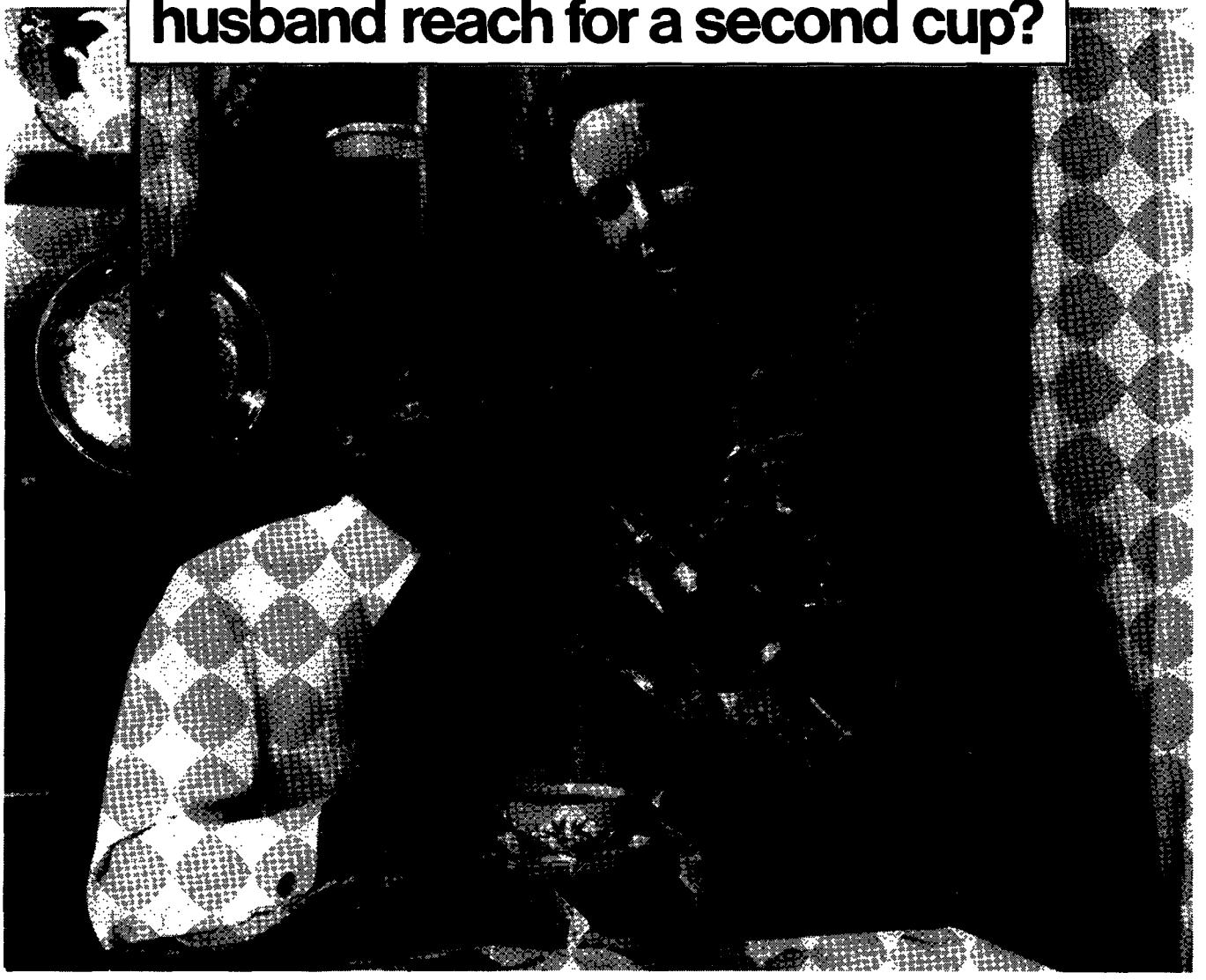

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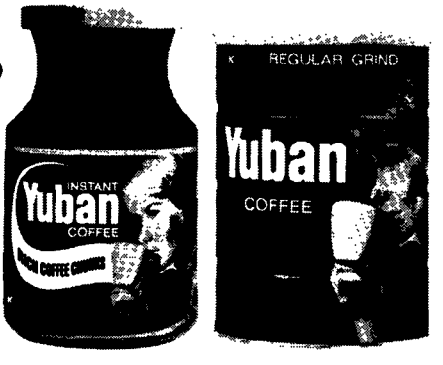

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of which did not prevent them from trying again. Other chapters are devoted to uprisings, the most dramatic of them the revolt in the corrective-labor camp of Kengir, where in the spring of 1954, 8,000 convicts actually seized control of the camp, chose a commission to run their affairs and negotiate with the authorities, and, by virtue of superior organization and political acumen (which included summary executions of known informers and a pact with the criminal elements —as a rule the most hateful enemies of the "politicals"), were able to hold out for forty days.

Determined to raise only "legal" demands and avoid provocative "anti-Soviet" slogans, the rebels succeeded at first in staving off any reprisals by the authorities. But in the end, their protestations of loyalty to the "Soviet regime," the "Soviet constitution," or the "Presidium of the Central Committee" and their seemingly reasonable demands ("an eight-hour day, as for free workers," or "unrestricted correspondence with relatives") proved of no avail. The authorities temporized, engaged in half-hearted negotiations, and then suddenly struck with tanks, airplanes, and cannons, killing and maiming more than 700 prisoners, shipping off about a thousand to Kolyma, and then meting out stiff sentences to the leaders of the insurrection. Solzhenitsyn makes it clear that few of the rebels had actually believed that their demands would be met; but just as a "runaway escapes to enjoy one day of freedom," so "these 8,000 men had not so much raised a rebellion as *escaped to freedom*, though not for long."

True to his determination to show that his "people" were really not "so long-suffering" and "so humbly submissive" as might be assumed, Solzhenitsyn offers not only fascinating details on revolts within the Archipelago, but also outside it. His account of the largest workers' uprising since the 1920's, which took place in Novocherkassk in June 1962, is probably the fullest to have reached us thus far. All this, and much more (including a chapter on the massacre of the *kulaks* in the early 1930's) makes Solzhenitsyn's work the most monumental indictment of Stalinist despotism. But what does it tell us about the author himself, now so magisterially among us—his personal qualities, his overall stature as a political and social critic? Here, I am afraid, the answer is far from simple. For the contradictions that emerge from his writings are difficult to ignore; the author of the essay on "Repentance and Self-Limitation" (in the collection *From Under the Rubble*), the Christian moralist *par excellence*, nevertheless takes an almost sensual pleasure in describing the killings of informers. A writer so remarkably sensitive to the nuances of human behavior finds it impossible to forgive a former camp guard who attempted to explain to Solzhenitsyn why he and other young men (all between the ages of eighteen and twenty-two) had fallen victim to Soviet propaganda, and why "there were things they didn't understand about this absurd and dreadful form of service." "How much, then," asks Solzhenitsyn, "did they understand? It's either all or nothing . . . their underlying common humanity must have been weak, or altogether lacking, if it was not proof against an oath and a few political discussion periods."

BUT what of Solzhenitsyn himself, who, by his own admission, had remained an ardent Marxist-Leninist until the second year of his imprisonment? Where, one sometimes wonders, is Solzhenitsyn's charity and compassion—the two qualities he prizes so highly? And what explains his venomous and often fatuous polemical attacks on Western "liberals"? Was it really only "those studies by liberal historians" which "contemptuously" portrayed the Russian people as nothing but "slaves"? If anything, liberal and socialist historians have paid more attention to the various 19th-century revolutionary movements than they probably deserve.

Solzhenitsyn's treatment of General Vlasov, whose "Russian Liberation Army" fought alongside Hitler both against the Western Allies and the USSR, is a striking illustration of the tension between his volcanic hatred of the Soviet regime on the one hand and his attributes as a historian on the other. In his first volume, Solzhenitsyn described the plight of thousands of Russian prisoners-of-war who had joined Vlasov's army out of a sense of hopelessness, out of hunger and despair. He did this without in the least (as mendaciously charged by his Soviet detractors) justifying or exonerating either Vlasov or his followers. Now in Volume III he portrays Hitler's Russian allies not merely as hapless victims of circumstances, but as heroes who deserved support and admiration. That those who turned against the Stalinist system had ample reason to hate it—as Solzhenitsyn notes—is indisputable. But it takes a curiously distorted vision of history (and, for that matter, of morality) to forget that among the Russian and Ukrainian Vlasovites there were many enthusiastic accomplices of Hitler's war against the Jews, that there were those who fought not merely *against* Stalin but *for* Hitler. Much the same can be said about Solzhenitsyn's suggestion that the Western Allies should have entered World War II to destroy not only Nazism but the Soviet regime as well—and that they should, therefore, have permitted the Vlasov army (and by extension all other collaborationist forces) to "develop unhindered" rather than letting it "perish ignominiously."

WHETHER or not we consider Solzhenitsyn the "greatest living Russian writer," there is no denying that in some essential respects he is very much a creature of the system he so passionately loathes. Nor could it be otherwise. Over the past few years we have gradually grown accustomed to the fact that many of the most illustrious arrivals from the Soviet Union bear the marks of its pervasive ethos: intolerance, lack of historical perspective, a tendency to see the world in Manichean terms, a search for ideological (or religious?) absolutes, a zeal for crusades. *The Gulag Archipelago* is surely an apposite example. It would be as inexcusable to ignore its flaws as to underrate its searing achievements.

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Before you ask your pharmacist for a cheaper version of the medication prescribed by your doctor, consider.

In making the "same" drug, different companies may exercise different levels of skill and care. They formulate and manufacture the "same" product differently.

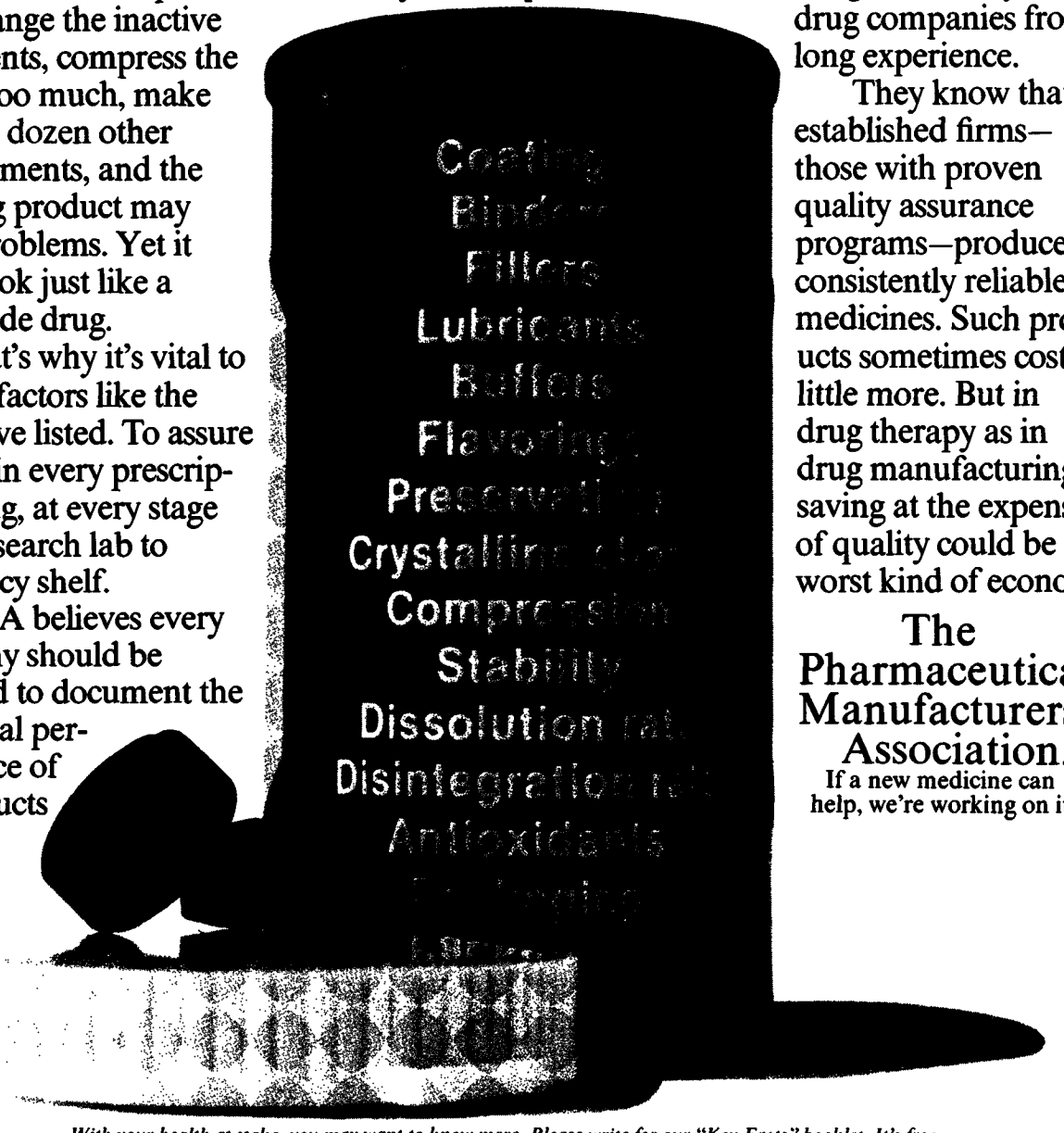
Change the inactive ingredients, compress the tablets too much, make any of a dozen other misjudgments, and the resulting product may cause problems. Yet it could look just like a well-made drug.

That's why it's vital to control factors like the few we've listed. To assure quality in every prescription drug, at every stage from research lab to pharmacy shelf.

PMA believes every company should be required to document the biological performance of its products and identify the actual manufacturer on the package label. Because the manufacturer's competence is the key to quality.

To know you're getting a drug of assured quality at an acceptable price, ask your doctor and your pharmacist. These professionals know drugs. And they know drug companies from long experience.

They know that established firms—those with proven quality assurance programs—produce consistently reliable medicines. Such products sometimes cost a little more. But in drug therapy as in drug manufacturing, a saving at the expense of quality could be the worst kind of economy.



The Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Association.

If a new medicine can help, we're working on it.

With your health at stake, you may want to know more. Please write for our "Key Facts" booklet. It's free. The Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Association, Dept. CM-902, 1155 Fifteenth St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20005.

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